DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 344 490 FL 020 354

TITLE	Hebrew Proficiency Guidelines.
INSTITUTION	Brandeis Univ., Waltham, MA. Dept. of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	97p.; Some writing samples may not reproduce well.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Error Correction; Functional Literacy; Guidelines; *Hebrew; Language Fluency; *Language Proficiency; Listening Comprehension; Reading Comprehension; *Second Language Learning; Uncommonly Taught Languages; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

ABSTRACT

Guidelines for Hebrew language proficiency are presented in two companion volumes which are identical except that one gives examples of various linguistic forms in Hebrew and the other provides them in Roman script. These guidelines are based on the generic guidelines published in 1986 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. They are the result of a 2-year project carried out during 1988-1990 by a national committee based at Brandeis University (Waltham, Massachusetts). The guidelines exemplify the characteristics of each level of the generic guidelines, and for each skill provide a description of the functional linguistic behavior of non-native users of Modern Hebrew ranging from the total beginner to the person with full professional competence. All the examples in these documents are from data collected specifically for this project. An extensive analysis of Oral Proficiency Interviews which included writing samples and listening and reading comprehension samples was conducted by the Hebrew Guidelines Committee over the 2-year period of the project. Although the guidelines emphasize functional ability, examples of typical errors characteristic of the samples examined are also included. (LB)

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HEBREW PROFICIENCY

GUIDELINES

(דוגמאות בעברית)

FL 020 354

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Introduction

The Hebrew Proficiency Guidelines are based on the generic guidelines published in 1986 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). ACTFL describes the guidelines as

> a hierarchy of global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each description is a representative, not an exhaustive, sample of a particular range of ability, and each level subsumes all previous levels, moving from simple to complex in an "all-before-and-more" fashion.
>
> Because these guidelines identify stages of proficiency, as opposed to achievement, they are not intended to measure what an individual has achieved through specific classroom instruction but rather to allow assessment of what an individual can and cannot do, regardless of where, when, or how the language has been learned or acquired; thus, the words "learned" and "acquired" are used in the broadest sense. These guidelines are not based on a particular linguistic theory or pedagogical method, since the guidelines are proficiency-based, as opposed to achievement-based, and are intended to be used for global assessment.

It is especially important to bear in mind that the levels in the Guidelines are only partial descriptions of the characteristics of a range of performance. Thus, they are neither goals for teaching or curricular sequencing, nor absolute criteria for measuring learner outcomes. The Guidelines can be helpful in curriculum and test development; however, such usage has to be guided by a thorough understanding of the learning goals underlying the Guidelines. The statements and examples included in each level can only capture a small part of the conceptual, partial and full control of various linguistic and socio-linguistic characteristic of that specific level.

The Hebrew Guidelines are the result of a two-year project funded by a grant from the United States Department of Education, which was carried out during 1988-1990 by a national committee based at Brandeis University. The members of the committee were:

Shmuel Bolozky, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Rivka Dori, Hebrew Union College (Los Angeles) and University of Southern California
Ruth Gollan, Brandeis University (Project Director)
Edna Grad, Northwestern University (first year)
Benjamin Hary, Emory University
Adina Ofek, Jewish Theological Seminary of America
Jonathan Paradise, University of Minnesota
Vardit Ringvald, Brandeis University (second year).

The Hebrew Guidelines, like the other language-specific guidelines developed to date, exemplify the characteristics of each level of the generic guidelines in a specific language. The guidelines for each skill provide a description of the functional linguistic behavior of non-native users of Modern Hebrew ranging from the total beginner (Novice-Low) to the person with "full professional competence in the language" (Superior) or, in the receptive skills of listening and reading, an even higher level of competence (Distinguished).

All the examples included in the Hebrew Guidelines are from data collected specifically for this project. An extensive analysis of Oral Proficiency Interviews as well as writing samples and listening and reading comprehension samples was conducted by the Hebrew Guidelines Committee over the two-year period of the grant.

While the Guidelines emphasize functional ability, examples of typical errors characteristic of the samples examined have also been included. The more detailed description of both strengths and weaknesses which may characterize each level should be helpful to those who will use the Guidelines as a basis for further research, rating and instruction. The descriptions of the Intermediate-High and Advanced-High levels have generally been kept shorter, with fewer or no examples, since these levels incorporate many of the significant features of both the preceding and the following ranges. The prominent characteristic of these two levels is the unevenness and lack of consistency of the performance. Often the person's performance appears to be at the next higher level, but just as often it sinks back to the one before.

An effort was made to obtain as broad and diverse a sample as possible within the time constraints of the project. However, additional research and, in particular, test development will be necessary in order to confirm that the samples are indeed representative and to explore the properties of the proficiency scale in greater depth.

Since its inception, the development of proficiency guidelines has been an ongoing, interactive process. No version of the guidelines is considered final or definitive. This first version of the Hebrew Guidelines should serve as a basis for a more general and objective description of proficiency in the four skills than has been possible in the past, and should facilitate the creation of proficiency-based tests and curricula. However, since the Guidelines are intended to help describe the proficiency of any non-native who has learned Hebrew in any kind of setting, and since large numbers of people learn Hebrew outside of university settings, further research and discussion leading to the refinement and revision of the Guidelines is essential. It is hoped that these Guidelines will facilitate such research and lead to productive discussions among professors of Hebrew. They should also facilitate cross-fertilization between researchers and instructors of Hebrew and those teaching other languages for which guidelines have already been developed.

The committee would like to acknowledge with gratitude the help of David Hiple of ACTFL, who has served as tester trainer and consultant to the committee since the inception of the project, and of these others who have provided assistance, guidance and suggestions during the course of the project: Roger Allen, University of Pennsylvania; Nancy Anderson, Educational Testing Service; Shulamit Bitran, Clark University; Heidi Byrnes, Georgetown University; Michael Carasik, staff assistant to the committee; Rina Donchin, University of Illinois; Vijai Gambhir, University of Pennsylvania; Yehiel Hayon, Ohio State University; Isabelle Kaplan, ACTFL; Samuel Livingston, ETS; Gilead Morahg, University of Wisconsin; Zila Naor, Brandeis University; Nissan Netzer, Bar-Ilan University; Raphael Nir, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Bonit Porath, Brandeis University; Asher Rivlin, Tel Aviv University and World Zionist Organization, New York; Meira Rom, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Elana Shohamy, Tel Aviv University; Irene Thompson, George Washington University; Ronald Walton, National Foreign Language Center and University of Maryland; Leora Weinbach, Center for Education Technology, Tel Aviv; and Zehava Weizman, Harvard University.

The Generic Guidelines were revised and prepared by Heidi Byrnes; James Child; Nina Levinson; Pardee Lowe, Jr.; Seiichi Makino; Irene Thompson; and A. Ronald Walton.

For the convenience of those who do not read Hebrew, a set of the Hebrew Guidelines with the examples transliterated into Roman characters is available.

The sign * denotes an error.

SPEAKING

All the examples are taken from recorded oral interviews conducted for this project. The sign * denotes an error.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material.

Novice-Low

Generic. Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.

Hebrew. No functional ability to communicate in Hebrew. Oral production is limited to several isolated words or expressions, such as שלום "hi," אני "I," כן "yes," לא "no," תודה "thanks," and familiar loanwords from Jewish/Israeli culture such as "Shabbat," "chutzpa," "pita," "aliyah," "kibbutz."

Novice-Mid

Generic. Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers may be understood only with great difficulty.

Hebrew. No significant functional ability to communicate in Hebrew. Primarily reactive; intelligible only to sympathetic listeners. Oral production is limited to repetition of interviewer's input or memorized utterances. Functions are limited to some courtesy formulas (מה שלומך? "how are you?"; נעים מאד "pleased to meet you"), listing and enumerating, and simple, mostly memorized phrases and sentences (אני גרה בבוסטון "I live in Boston"; אני אוהבת פיצה "I like pizza"). Content may consist of common lexical items related to people (אבא "father," אמא "mother," תלמיד "student,"

חבר "friend"); objects and places (כיסא "chair," שולחן "table," חדר "room," כיתה "class"); food (תפוז "orange," לחם "bread," דג "fish"); days of the week (יום שישי "Friday," יום ראשון "Sunday"); numbers 1-10; and loan words such as *universita, hamburger, kafe*.

Speech is characterized by long pauses, frequent groping for words, use of first language, few adjectives, lack of agreement between subject and verb and inaccurate use of personal pronouns. The Novice-Mid speaker may have a surprisingly large vocabulary of isolated words and phrases acquired through the study of Jewish culture. However, knowledge of these lexical items does not increase functional ability in the language.

Novice-High

Generic. Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple recombinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centers on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.

Hebrew. Emerging, but not sustained, ability to engage in basic communicative exchanges, mainly through recombination or expansion of learned material (הם גם רוצים ללמוד אנגלית "They want to study English too"; אני עובדת באוניברסיטה "I work at the university"). Content is still usually limited to a few topics, concerning self and immediate surroundings such as food, the family, the classroom (... המשפחה שלי גרה ב "My family lives in ..."; אני הולכת למוזאיון, "I am going to a museum"). Creativity is reflected in the emerging ability to ask some questions, cope with simple survival situations such as ordering a basic meal, inviting someone over, or buying a ticket. Most statements are in the present tense. Occasional use of simple adverbs of time (עכשיו "now," היום "today") and space (שם "there," פה "here") and partial control of

conjunctions (אני אוהב עברית גם אנגלית "I like Hebrew, English too") add some detail to the Novice-High speaker's sentences.

However, errors are frequent and may include improper use of the infinitive (אני רוצה *כותבת סיפורים, "I want to *write stories") and lack of agreement in number (חברים *טוב, "good [sg.] *friends [pl.]") or gender (אמא *אומר, "Mother [f.] *says [m.]"). Speakers may have difficulty in producing sounds not found in the first language. Communication even with sympathetic interlocutors may be difficult.

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode;
- initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; and
- ask and answer questions.

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstanding frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Hebrew. Able to engage in some simple conversations such as introductions, greetings, invitations, expressions of likes and dislikes, and obtaining information in order to fulfill immediate needs. Uses a limited number of simple sentences, mostly one or two at a time; most are still reactive and repeat part of the question. Limited but sustained creativity is reflected in the ability to ask and answer simple questions (איפה את עובדת? "Where do you work?"; כמה זה עולה? "How much does it cost?") and combine known elements to say things with a measure of spontaneity. Able to survive uncomplicated

daily situations such as buying a bus ticket, asking for directions, or ordering food in a restaurant.

The Intermediate-Low speaker attempts to carry on conversations, mostly on topics such as everyday activities (אני אוהבת לקרוא ולכתוב, "I like to read and write"; אני עובד כי אני רוצה כסף "I work because I want money"), the family, friends and other narrowly defined familiar topics.

Errors resulting in miscommunication frequently occur, but with repetition the speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, who would understand responses like the following: אני לא שָׂמֵחַ, כי אני רוצָה שהשם שלי *עברית חיה, "I (f.) am not happy (m.), because I want my Hebrew name (to be) Chaya"; היא *למדה עברית גם, *אני למד עם *me." "She *studied Hebrew too, she *studied with

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs: e.g., personal history and leisure-time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may still be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Hebrew. Able to maintain a variety of uncomplicated face-to-face conversations in highly predictable surroundings. More interactive and creative than the previous level. Produces strings or lists of sentences in sequence, though still not in utterances of paragraph length. Emerging ability to use the past tense. Topics are similar to those of the Intermediate-Low level, but with increased quantity and quality of speech. Examples: יש חרבה אנשים שאומרים שוושינגטון מקום טוב מאוד "There are many people who say that Washington is a very good place"; האמא שלי היא גם לא אוהבת את הנעלים שלי "My mother does not like my shoes either"; היום יפה מאוד, קצת קר, אכל

יפה "It's a nice day today, a bit cold, but nice." Able to handle a variety of survival situations.

Can get information by asking simple questions such as למה את באת לאמריקה? "Why did you come to America?"; בן כמה הילד שלך? "How old is your son?"; מה את עושה כאן? "What are you doing here?"; איפה את עובדת? "Where do you work?"; מתי באת לאוניברסיטה? "When did you come to the university?"; מאין אתה בא? "Where do you come from?"

Errors may include lack of agreement and failure to use the construct state (אני לא חושבת שאני *קרוב *למשפחה הדודים "I don't think that I am *close to the uncles' *family"); inaccuracies in verbal forms (*קנהתי "I *bought"); incorrect word order (פרופסור *מאחר אוניברסיטה "professor from *another university"); and incorrect use of the definite article. In responses to questions, often uses question markers as conjunctions (אני לא לומד *מתי אני הולך לעבודה "I don't study *when I go to work").

Such mistakes usually do not prevent the Intermediate-Mid speaker from being understood by a sympathetic interlocutor.

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Can initiate, sustain, and close a general conversation with a number of strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and topics, but errors are evident. Limited vocabulary still necessitates hesitation and may bring about slightly unexpected circumlocution. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narration and/or description. The Intermediate-High speaker can generally be understood even by interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers at this level, but repetition may still be required.

Hebrew. Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Emerging but not sustained ability to narrate and describe simple activities and situations in connected speech using a variety of the more frequent conjunctions, such as או "or," ו "and," אבל "but," משני ש- "because," כש- "when" (זה נושא קשה מאוד אבל יש דברים לעשות ... " ... This is a difficult subject, but there are things to be done.... "). Accuracy of expression is increased through correct use of

the infinitive and of common verbs in the past tense. Emerging ability to express future time (בחופש אני מתכונן לנסוע חביתה "I'm planning to go home during vacation"), with some difficulty in the use of morphological future forms. Can occasionally express opinions in simple terms and handle situations with some complications. Is becoming less dependent on sympathetic interlocutors.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- converse in a clearly participatory fashion;
- initiate, sustain and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events;
- satisfy the requirements of school and work situations;
- narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

Advanced

Generic. Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by commmunicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

Hebrew. Able to satisfy routine social demands and school or work requirements. Increasing control of subordinate clauses as well as common verb patterns, gender, number, subject/verb and noun/adjective agreement permits the Advanced speaker to narrate, describe and compare in complete though simple paragraphs (אחר כך

... אני צריך לקנות "afterwards I need to buy ... "; אם תבואי "If you come"; הוא חושב ש- "He thinks that"; כשביקרתי בישראל "When I visited Israel"). Can state an opinion--not yet fully supported--on topics of general interest such as current issues and events, politics, sports, the weather, social issues. Can handle situations with a complication, such as being stranded at the airport, losing documents, being late to work, or returning a purchase for a refund. Is often able to resort to circumlocution and other communication strategies when specific vocabulary fails.

Good control of most common prepositions, including those governed by frequently used verbs, and of inflected prepositions, leads to greater clarity: אומר ל- "says to"; מדבר עם "speaks with"; מורה לעברית "a teacher of Hebrew"; לי "to me," אתי "with me," על ידי "next to me." Errors may be caused by interference from native language, e.g. עזר את* "help *[+ direct object]"; על יום ראשון* "*on Sunday"; מדבר ל-* "speak *to"; גרתי על קבוץ* "I lived *on a kibbutz."

Other errors may include occasional realization in the wrong verb pattern such as לבשנו* "we *dressed [trans.]" for התלבשנו "we got dressed" and סוגרת* החנות "the store *closes [trans.]" instead of נסגרת "closes [intrans.]"; gender/number errors (מילים *קשים "*hard words"; זה הארץ* "*This is the land"). But such errors rarely lead to misunderstandings in communication with native speakers.

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. There is emerging evidence of ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize. The Advanced-High speaker often shows a well developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms with confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing and circumlocution. Differentiated vocabulary and intonation are effectively used to communicate fine shades of meaning. The Advanced-High speaker often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech but under the demands of Superior-level, complex tasks language may break down or prove inadequate.

Hebrew. Able to converse in a clearly participatory fashion and to satisfy the requirements of a variety of everyday, school, work or social situations. Increase in quality and quantity of Advanced tasks

or functions. Greater accuracy in use of prepositions, subordinate clauses, verb forms and gender agreement. Partial but inconsistent ability to hypothesize (using אלו "if" and the appropriate verb tenses), support opinions, handle abstractions in extended discourse, and otherwise perform at the Superior level. Some groping for words and other mistakes still occur, especially when discussing unfamiliar topics or attempting to use more specific or sophisticated vocabulary (e.g., "veterinarian," "district attorney," "decline in the ability"; ... אדם שמעשן אומר שזה סוגע *בחופשיות שלו "a man who smokes says that it impinges on his *freedom ..."). Patterned errors also appear, but they are more likely to be idiosyncratic to the particular speaker than characteristic of Advanced-High speaking in general.

Superior

The superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

• participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and

• support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

Generic. Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior-level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectical variants. The Superior-level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of errors are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

Hebrew. Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on

practical, social and professional matters. Can discuss a broad range of concrete as well as abstract topics, including unfamiliar ones, in extended and connected discourse. Can handle unfamiliar situations, support opinions, and hypothesize, using אלו and אלמלא "if" and the appropriate verb forms. Functional mastery of the verb and noun patterns (*binyanim* and *miškalim*). Some ability to shift registers appropriately (יש לנו בבית הספר ילדים יוצאים מן הכלל, ממש יוצאי דופן "We have some [idiomatic equivalent of] **really extraordinary** kids in our school"). Uses idiomatic expressions (הסתכלתי בו שעה ארוכה "I looked at him **for a long while**"; היא שימשה בתפקידים חשובים "She **held** important jobs ... ").

No patterned errors and no groping for words. Unpatterned errors may still occur (e. g., טופסים* "*forms"; כמו שאין לו בית* "*as (if) he doesn't have a home"; זה *למה יש הבדל "that's *why there's a difference"; האם את רוצה *להתפגש ולשוחח? "Would you like *to get together and talk?"). Such errors may clearly distinguish the Superior speaker as a non-native, but they do not interfere with communication or disturb the native speaker.

LISTENING

The Hebrew Listening Guidelines are based on data collected by the Hebrew Guidelines Committee through a listening comprehension test, Oral Proficiency Interviews and classroom observation. The test was recorded on audio tape and it included both unmodified recordings of news broadcasts and simulated authentic dialogues. Additional research will be necessary in order to develop the test fully and to collect data based on a wider variety of listening tasks.

These guidelines assume that all the listening segments are delivered at a normal pace of speech with natural intonation and stress patterns. The ability of listeners at the lower end of the scale can be enhanced or hampered by the existence of different listening conditions such as slowed or rapid speech, repetition, a familiar or unfamiliar accent, visual cues, background noise, the age of the speaker, etc.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to recognize learned material and isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context.

Novice-Low

Generic. Understanding is limited to occasional isolated words, such as cognates, borrowed words, and high-frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.

Hebrew. No practical understanding of spoken Hebrew. Understanding is limited to occasional familiar words, e.g.: borrowed words (אוניברסיטה "university," קפה "coffee," קפטריה "cafeteria," קונצרט "concert," מוזאון "museum"); social conventions (שלום "hello/goodbye," כן "yes," לא "no," תודה "thank you); terminology acquired through religious or cultural contexts (שנה טובה "Happy New Year," שופר "shofar"); and occasional other isolated words or phrases. Even these terms are usually recognized only when heard in isolation and very clearly enunciated in fully specified contexts.

Novice-Mid

Generic. Able to understand some short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends some words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae about topics that refer to basic personal information or the immediate physical setting. The listener requires long pauses for assimilation and periodically requests repetition and/or a slower rate of speech.

Hebrew. Able to understand some memorized words and phrases or simple questions (אתה רוצה סוכר? "Do you want sugar?"; קפה או תה? "Coffee or tea?") when strongly supported by context and clearly enunciated. Understanding is limited to familiar context areas such as the family (אבא "father," אמא "mother," משפחה "family," אח "brother," אחות "sister"), home, food, school, some numbers (1-10), common courtesy formulae (בקר טוב "good morning," בבקשה "please/you're welcome," מה נשמע? "What's up?" נעים מאד "pleased to

meet you"), and high-frequency commands (קח "take," שב "sit," תן "give," בא "come," לך "go"). Familiar context or vocabulary facilitates comprehension of a surrounding phrase; e.g., "Does X live in New York?" may be understood because of the familiar names and/or the intonation.

The Novice-Mid listener may require frequent repetition or rewording even of most simple questions (?מאין אתה "Where are you from?"; ?מי זה "Who is it?"; ?איפה הבית שלך "Where is your home?"). Misunderstandings arise even with most common questions, such as confusion of ?מה שמך "What is your name?" and ?מה שלומך "How are you?" Listener may require long pauses for assimilation.

Novice-High

Generic. Able to understand short, learned utterances and some sentence-length utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae. May require repetition, rephrasing and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension.

Hebrew. Able to understand short, memorized phrases and some sentence-length utterances (אני חולה היום "I'm sick today") in face-to-face conversations, particularly when strongly supported by pictures, gestures, or other context, and when speech is very clear. Comprehends some basic questions (?מתי השעור לעברית "When is Hebrew class?"; ?מה אתה עושה "What are you doing?"), statements (יש לי שעור עברית בבקר "I have Hebrew class in the morning") and high-frequency commands (תן לי ספר "Give me a book") found in daily behavior involving family, school, leisure time activities and other familiar areas. May require repetition, rephrasing and/or slow, careful speech for comprehension. Minor modifications caused by word inflection are enough to render a familiar word unrecognizable (קטן/קטנה "small [m./f.]," כחול/כחולה"blue [m./f.]," etc.).

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from interactive exchanges and simple connected aural texts.

The Intermediate level is characterized by the listener's ability to:

- understand complete sentences;
- understand compound sentences in familiar contexts;
- catch the gist of longer utterances in familiar contexts which allow for a high probability of correct guessing from a minimum of word clues.

Comprehension is degraded when the listener is pressured by the need to provide a spoken response or by listening to speech which cannot be repeated or altered (e.g., radio, telephone answering machine).

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned elements in a limited number of content areas, particularly if strongly supported by the situational context. Content refers to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and routine tasks, such as getting meals and receiving simple instructions and directions. Listening tasks pertain primarily to spontaneous face-to-face conversations. Understanding is often uneven; repetition and rewording may be necessary. Misunderstandings in both main ideas and details arise frequently.

Hebrew. Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned/acquired elements in a limited number of context areas: school, restaurant (מה אתה רוצה לאכול? "What would you like to eat?") home (יש ספה על-יד השלחן "There is a sofa next to the table"), lodging (יש כאן בית מלון? "Is there a hotel here?"), transportation, simple directions, time (מה השעה? "What time is it?") and weather (היום קר מאד "It's really cold today"). Understands the gist of simple face-to-face conversations and instructions given by a sympathetic speaker. Some repetition and rewording is still usually necessary for comprehension. Misunderstandings in both main ideas and details arise frequently.

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned utterances on a variety of topics. Content continues to refer primarily to basic personal background and needs, social conversations and somewhat more complex tasks,

such as lodging, transportation, and shopping. Additional content areas include some personal interests and activities, and a greater diversity of instructions and directions. Listening tasks not only pertain to spontaneous face-to-face conversations but also to short routine telephone conversations and some deliberate speech, such as simple announcements and reports over the media. Understanding continues to be uneven.

Hebrew. Sufficient comprehension to understand simple face-to-face and some overheard conversations about topics beyond basic survival needs (e.g., personal history, sports, social life, hobbies). Evidence of ability to recognize basic constructions which allow for discrimination between male and female, singular and plural, present and sometimes future and past. The Intermediate-Mid listener often understands questions such as האם אתה אוהב מזג אוויר חם? "Do you like hot weather?"; מה תעשה כשתגמור ללמוד באוניברסיטה? "What will you do when you finish college?" if the question is anticipated. Able to comprehend short routine phone conversations and some deliberate speech on simple tape-recordings. Can sometimes get main idea, but no details, from a conversation on unfamiliar topics.

Understanding continues to be uneven; repetition and rewording may still be necessary. May sometimes have difficulty even with simple questions מה עשית בחופש? "What did you do during vacation?"; מה תעשה בקיץ? "What will you do this summer?") when they are not set in a suitable context.

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to sustain understanding over longer stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics pertaining to different times and places; however, understanding is inconsistent to due failure to grasp main ideas and/or details. Thus, while topics do not differ significantly from those of an Advanced-level listener, comprehension is less in quantity and poorer in quality.

Hebrew. Comprehends longer stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics which are not limited to a single context of time or place, e.g., narrative about what happened on a camping trip or about someone's future plans. Increasing ability to use contextual, lexical, grammatical and other clues to grasp partially understood sentences (e.g., the listener figures out עירוני/ת "urban, urbanite" from עיר "city"). Greater understanding of conceptual words in general (מהור

"pure," דמויות "characters," אפי "character, nature"). Topics do not differ significantly from those of the Advanced listener, but understanding is inconsistent due to failure to grasp all details.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of factual topics beyond the immediacy of the situation, including some topics where comprehension is complicated due to an unexpected sequence of events.

Generic. Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation. Comprehension may be uneven due to a variety of linguistic and extralinguistic factors, among which topic familiarity is very prominent. These texts frequently involve description and narration in different time frames or aspects, such as present, nonpast, habitual, or imperfective. Texts may include interviews, short lectures on familiar topics, and news items and reports dealing primarily with factual information. Listener is aware of cohesive devices but may not be able to use them to follow the sequence of thought in an oral text.

Hebrew. Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the most concrete, factual situations. Able to anticipate the flow of the utterance sufficiently to fill in the speaker's pauses correctly. Can understand most face-to-face speech of a native speaker when spoken at a normal rate of speed. Can get the gist of a factual radio report on a familiar subject and of a television report even on a less familiar topic.

Listener is aware of some, but not all, cohesive devices (e.g., אלמלא "if only ... not," למרות ש- "although," אף על פי ש- "despite the fact that," לעומת זאת "on the other hand," קרוב לוודאי ש- "it's almost certain that," בהשוואה ל- "compared to") but may not be able to use them to follow the sequence of thought. Mostly unable to follow animated speech of two or more speakers who speak "on top" of each other or through background noise. Will not recognize known words in rapid speech when elided with preceding or succeeding words (e.g., א for ה "the," ת' for את-ה [direct object marker]).

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to understand the main ideas of most speech in a standard dialect; however, the listener may not be able to sustain comprehension in extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex. Listener shows an emerging awareness of culturally implied meanings beyond the surface meanings of the text but may fail to grasp socio-cultural nuances of the message.

Hebrew. Can comprehend the formal speech in use on Israeli radio, despite the lack of visual clues. In face-to-face conversations, able to understand a more elevated or idiomatic style, e.g.: יש בכך אי-צדק משוע "this constitutes a glaring injustice"; לנקוט באמצעים "to take steps"; יש תחושה שחמצב ענום "There is a feeling that the situation is gloomy." Word order and other syntactic features of written Hebrew (e.g., nouns with possessive endings, infinitive plus direct object suffix) do not cause breakdown.

Listener shows an emerging awareness of culturally implied meaning beyond the surface meaning of the text but may fail to grasp socio-cultural nuances of the message (e.g., להסיק מסקנות, literally "to draw conclusions," which in an Israeli political context is understood to mean that the one drawing the conclusions should resign his post). Can distinguish expressions in other registers (slang, biblical or rabbinic Hebrew) but may not always be able to comprehend them (e.g., לנהוג איפה ואיפה "to discriminate between").

Superior

The Superior level is characterized by an ability to understand concrete and abstract topics in extended discourse offered by speakers using native-like discourse strategies.

Generic. Able to understand the main ideas of all speech in a standard dialect, including technical discussion in a field of specialization. Can follow the essentials of extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex, as in academic/professional settings, in lectures, speeches, and reports. Listener shows some appreciation of aesthetic norms of target language, of idioms, colloquialisms, and register shifting. Able to make inferences within the cultural framework of the target language. Understanding is aided by an awareness of the underlying organization structure of the oral text and includes sensitivity for its

social and cultural references and its affective overtones. Rarely misunderstands but may not understand excessively rapid, highly colloquial speech or speech that has strong cultural references.

Hebrew. Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all standard speech, including telephone calls, radio broadcasts, films and theater plays, editorials and reports, academic and professional discussions and lectures within own area of expertise, non-technical public policy statements, some literary readings, and some jokes, puns and idioms.

May still have difficulty with technical language (especially outside own field of specialization), very formal high register, biblical expressions, slang (e.g., may take יצאתם מזה? literally as "Did you get out of it?" rather than colloquially as "Had you gotten out of the habit?") or very rapid speech. Sporadic, non-predictable failure to understand vocabulary, especially out of context, can still be expected.

Distinguished

The Distinguished level is characterized by an ability to understand most linguistic styles and forms from within the cultural framework of the language.

Generic. Able to understand all forms and styles of speech pertinent to personal, social and professional needs tailored to different audiences. Shows strong sensitivity to social and cultural references and aesthetic norms by processing language from within the cultural framework. Texts include theater plays, screen productions, editorials, symposia, academic debates, public policy statements, literary readings, and most jokes and puns. May have difficulty with some dialects and slang.

Hebrew. Able to understand with ease most forms and styles of speech related to personal, social and professional needs. Can understand and often identify the accents of immigrants from various countries. Is sensitive to mimicking, shifts in register, literary/religious references and nuance in general in forms as varied as cafe conversation, political speeches, and comedy routines. Will experience difficulty mainly when faced with rapid or emotionally charged speech or speech containing a relatively large proportion of unfamiliar slang or other in-group terms.

WRITING

The writing guidelines and all the examples given are based on samples of students' writing collected at the participating institutions. A variety of in-class and out-of-class, timed and untimed assignments were included in the analysis. No dictionaries were used in in-class assignments, and the question of the progressive development of dictionary use in writing was not investigated.

Samples at each of the levels described are appended to the Guidelines. It remains for future data gathering and analysis to confirm that the samples used are indeed representative.

The following criteria (not necessarily in order of importance) were considered in formulating the level descriptions:

- functional tasks
- topic and treatment
- length of sentences and length of the sample
- relationship between the sentences
- frequency of vocabulary lapses
- naturalness of idiom, style and register
- grammatical control
- syntax
- spelling.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to produce isolated words and phrases.

Novice-Low

Generic. Able to form some letters in alphabetic system. In languages whose writing systems use syllabaries or characters, writer is able to both copy and produce the basic strokes. Can produce romanization of isolated characters, where applicable.

Hebrew. Able to copy parts of printed text into script. In some cases, also able to write own name and a few isolated memorized words such as שלום "shalom" and ישראל "Israel," but not always accurately. Many errors exist in formation of letters, e.g., ם may be inverted; letters that resemble each other (such as י, ו, ן; ה, ח, ת) are frequently confused.

Novice-Mid

Generic. Able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases and reproduce some from memory. No practical communicative writing skills.

Hebrew. Able to copy most letters from print to script accurately and can write (sometimes inaccurately) a small number of familiar words such as בית "house," ארוחת בקר "breakfast," חדש "new." Can produce simple sentences which consist of learned words and phrases. No practical communicative writing skills. Has fairly complete control of sound-symbol correlation, but without distinguishing between homophones (ס/ש, ת/ט, ב/ו). Writes words known from speech mostly phonetically (e.g. *שמח מה "What's your name?" with ח instead of ך; *זות for זאת "this").

Novice-High

Generic. Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material and some recombinations thereof. Can supply information on simple forms and documents. Can write names, numbers, dates, own nationality, and other simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system or 50-100 characters or compounds in a character writing system. Spelling and representation of symbols (letters, syllables, characters) may be partially correct.

Hebrew. The ability to communicate in writing begins to appear at this level. Can create short lists of words related to self and immediate environment, e.g., basic biographical information, shopping lists, lists of courses, etc. Can recombine memorized materials into simple statements, short descriptive sentences or basic questions. However, word order is frequently incorrect (*אחת מורה "a teacher"), and pronouns are often omitted in the present tense (*מה כותבת "what are you writing?").

Occasionally still mixes written and printed letters, particularly where the differences are slight (e.g., ג and ז). Some letters may be formed incorrectly (e.g., מ, ם, ף, ץ) or confused with each other (ח, כ; ח, ה). Non-final forms of the letters כ, מ, נ, ם and צ are sometimes used at the end of a word. Spelling errors are frequent, especially in

the case of homophones (e.g., קטן "little" with כ instead of ק or ת instead of ט) and representations of vowels (e.g., *איפו instead of איפה "where?").

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to meet practical writing needs by communicating simple facts and ideas in a loose collection of sentences.

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Can write short messages, postcards, and take down simple notes, such as telephone messages. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences on very familiar topics. Language is inadequate to express in writing anything but elementary needs. Frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and in formation of nonalphabetic symbols, but writing can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Some ability to recombine learned material creatively into short sentences on familiar topics. Some ability to create simple questions as well. Topics are specific and closely tied to limited language experience, e.g., daily life, things I like to do, objects in the immediate environment and their description by means of basic adjectives: nice, good, big, new. Verbs are usually in the present and occasionally the past, but not always used accurately.

Frequent errors in grammar, especially lack of gender/number agreement (מסעדה *טוב "a good restaurant"; אנשים *טוב "good people"), are characteristic of this level. There is regular use of English (in English or Hebrew characters) where vocabulary is lacking.

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to meet a number of practical writing needs. Can write short, simple letters. Content involves personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in

personal experience. Can express present time or at least one other time frame or aspect consistently, e.g., nonpast, habitual, imperfective. Evidence of control of the syntax of noncomplex sentences and basic inflectional morphology, such as declensions and verb patterns. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on a given topic and provides little evidence of conscious organization. Can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to meet an increasing number of practical writing needs. Most writing tends to be a collection of sentences without complex subordinate clauses. The writer primarily uses the present tense and occasionally the past. The future is mostly expressed by use of adverbs (e.g., בשנה הבאה "next year"; מחר "tomorrow") with present tense verbs. There is emerging accuracy in spelling. In general, the writing reflects the writer's speaking ability and the subjects s/he is familiar with. Tasks may include notes, short letters and descriptions of personal activities and surroundings. Typical topics would be school, work, friends, the family, etc. Able to express feelings and desires, report on current activities, and ask for information in a very basic fashion. Writing at this level can be comprehended by a sympathetic reader who is used to the writing of non-natives. There is emerging use of circumlocution to overcome limitations in vocabulary (e.g., אני רוצה לכתוב לך תודה רבה "I want to write you 'many thanks' " instead of אני רוצה להודות לך "I want to thank you").

Word order is often incorrect; it is usually derived from the native language, e.g., *ארוך זמן "a long time"; *פסיכולוגיה חוג "Psychology Department." There are continued mistakes in gender and number agreement and in the use of the definite article (*גדולה לומדת הכיתה "the big class learns" instead of הכיתה הגדולה). The writer may still sometimes resort to an English word, spelled in Hebrew characters, when Hebrew vocabulary fails: *פרנס for "France," *אקונומיקה for "economics." Under the influence of the native language, connectives may be kept separate from the words to which they should be attached (*ו הלכתי "and I went"; *כש באה "when she came").

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to meet most practical writing needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics and respond in writing to personal questions. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, work and school experience. In those languages relying primarily on content words and time expressions to express time, tense, or aspect, some precision is displayed; where tense and/or aspect is expressed through verbal inflection, forms are produced rather consistently, but not always accurately. An ability to describe and narrate in paragraphs is emerging. Rarely uses basic cohesive elements, such as pronominal substitutions or synonyms in written discourse. Writing, though faulty, is generally comprehensible to natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to meet most practical and some social writing needs on topics related to the writer's immediate environment, such as biographical details, school and work. Some of the characteristics of the Intermediate-Mid level are still found at this level; however, both in the nature of functions and in the quality and quantity of the writer's output many of the characteristics of the Advanced level are already displayed. The Intermediate-High writer is able to take brief notes on familiar topics and to respond in writing to personal questions. Emerging ability to describe with some precision and to narrate in paragraphs. The writer demonstrates full control of simple sentences and uses more complex sentences linked by conjunctions, though the correct conjunction is not always chosen. Signs of better organizational ability begin to appear, but most writing still reflects the writer's speech.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by an ability to write narratives and descriptions of a factual nature of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics.

Advanced

Generic. Able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives

and descriptions of a factual nature. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution. May still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Good control of the morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures, e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination, but makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization (rhetorical structure) is emerging. Writing is understandable to natives not used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to write texts of several paragraphs in length, narrating, describing, and providing information on familiar, factual topics such as current events, social life, work and use of leisure time. Contexts include longer letters and short essays on personal experiences or personal reactions to events. The writer can perform more complex writing tasks such as expressing emotions and opinions (not yet fully supported), making comparisons, taking notes, writing summaries and the like. Organizational ability is evident, and vocabulary is sufficient for the writer to express self adequately with some circumlocution. There is good control of verb morphology in all tenses for common verbs, and the infinitive is correctly used. The writer also uses coordinate sentences with ו "and," או "or," and אבל "but." Use of subordination, though sometimes flawed, is also common. Future forms of the verb are used, but not always accurately, particularly in irregular verbs (e.g., אנסע* I will go"). Emerging ability to use אם and אלו ("if") + verbs to hypothesize.

The correct verbal root is sometimes used in the wrong verb pattern (רשמתי לקורסים* "I registered [trans.] for classes" instead of נרשמתי "I registered [intrans.]") or even in a pattern where that root is not found at all (נקיתי instead of ניקיתי "I cleaned"). The Advanced writer still often misuses or omits some prepositions, the relative particle -ש, and conjunctions (especially כדי ש- "in order to"): עזר *אותו "helped him"; אני חושב *אתה צודק "I think you are right." She/he sometimes fails to use subordinate clause when required after verbs such as רוצה "want" and מקוה "hope" (אני רוצה שאתה הולך* "I want you to go"). Circumlocution often results in a lack of precision (e.g., אלכוהול יכול לעשות הרבה דברים רעים לחיים "Alcohol

can do many bad things to life" instead of אלכוהול יכול להזיק "alcohol can damage").

A native reader has no difficulty understanding writing at this level.

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and in detail. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences fully but has difficulty supporting points of view in written discourse. Can write about the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints and pressure writing may be inaccurate. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weakness and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling or character writing formation may result in occasional miscommunication. Some misuse of vocabulary may still be evident. Style may still be obviously foreign.

Hebrew. Able to write about a variety of topics with precision and in detail. Can write most social and informal business correspondence, using conventional greetings, openings and closings. Can describe and narrate personal experiences well, but has difficulty supporting points of view in written discourse. Can write about the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. The writer has good control of a full range of grammatical structures and a fairly wide general vocabulary but cannot yet use them comfortably and naturally all of the time. Some misuse of vocabulary may still be evident, but even these errors are all made at a fairly sophisticated level of vocabulary and structure. Writing may still be influenced by the writer's native language. Does not yet have any clear style or ability to vary style according to different tasks and readers, but writing demonstrates a good sense of organization. Both in quality and quantity the writer at this level performs at the Superior level over half of the time.

Superior

The Superior level is characterized by an ability to write formally and informally on practical, social and professional topics.

Generic. Able to express self effectively in most formal and informal writing on practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos as well as social and business letters, and short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling or nonalphabetic symbol production, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to hypothesize and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. Errors in writing rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.

Hebrew. Able to express self effectively in most formal and informal writing on practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos, social and business letters, and short research papers in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to present and support arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. The length of writing at this level extends from a number or paragraphs up to a number of pages.

At this level the writer often employs the vocabulary of written Hebrew (כה "so," איננה "is not," הרי), some features of classical Hebrew (הינו "is") and Aramaicisms (דהיינו "that is") and shows general familiarity with the style and content of Hebrew writing as distinct from speech. The following features found in the writing of the educated native speaker can be expected to appear at this level: more extensive use of possessive suffixes and of the double genitive: נגעתי בידה "I touched her hand" instead of נגעתי לה ביד "I touched her on the hand"; נא להחזירו instead of להחזיר אותו "please return it"; מיתריה של הגיטרה instead of המיתרים של הגיטרה "the strings of the guitar"; use of the "in which" construction: הבית

בו גדלתי "the house in which I grew up"; use of adjectival construct phrases: אדם נמוך-קומה "a short man"; use of "resumptive pronouns": הנושא שאעמוד עליו "the subject I will discuss."

There is no evidence of patterned errors at this level. Mistakes may technically be the same as those at lower levels, but they occur only sporadically and at much higher levels of morphology, syntax and vocabulary. Some examples: slight mistakes in vocabulary: לא *רגשית instead of לא רגשנית "unemotional"; incorrect rendition of foreign names: *פלטו instead of אפלטון "Plato"; incorrect verb patterns: ... אסור הוא למעוט לנסות *לגשם את חלומו "A minority may not actualize its dream ... " instead of להגשים; occasional unpatterned spelling mistakes. Such errors rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.

READING

The Reading Guidelines are based on the analysis of data gathered by means of an experimental reading test developed specifically for this purpose. All texts included in the exam were authentic. Among them were personal notes, newspaper advertisements, items on current events and other articles from Hebrew newspapers, including *Ša'ar Lamaṯhil* (a newspaper for immigrants to Israel), and unedited passages from non-fiction books.

Some of the questions which were not investigated and will require further research are: the reader's ability to read and understand texts including plene versus defective spelling, abbreviations and acronyms, sarcasm, irony and humor. The influence of the use of a dictionary on the reader's proficiency at all levels also needs to be further examined. The use of vowels or lack thereof was investigated, but the results were inconclusive.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to

- identify isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context; and
- identify learned material.

Novice-Low

Generic. Able occasionally to identify isolated words and/or major phrases when strongly supported by context.

Hebrew. No functional ability to read Hebrew, but able to recognize some isolated letters and occasional learned words such as names, greetings and other words that may have been frequently seen in Hebrew writing (e.g., שלום, חי).

Novice-Mid

Generic. Able to recognize the symbols of an alphabetic and/or syllabic writing system and/or a limited number of characters in a system that uses characters. The reader can identify an increasing number of highly contextualized words and/or phrases including cognates and borrowed words, where appropriate. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase at a time, and rereading may be required.

Hebrew. Recognizes most consonants and understands that consonants in unpointed texts often stand for consonant + vowel. Able to recognize an increasing number of highly contextualized words and phrases, obvious loan words (סופרמרקט "supermarket," הונגריה "Hungary"), learned words and words known from cultural or religious background (פסח "Passover," שנה טובה "Happy New Year").

Novice-High

Generic. Has sufficient control of the writing system to interpret written language in areas of practical need. Where vocabulary has been learned, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps and signs. At times, but not on a consistent basis, the Novice-High level reader may be able to derive meaning from material at a slightly higher level where context and/or extralinguistic background knowledge are supportive.

Hebrew. Has complete knowledge of the Hebrew alphabetic system, but may still have difficulty distinguishing letters that resemble each other, such as ד and ר, ץ and ף. With help from context, can identify

the topic and some items from simple lists (TV programs, days of the week, names of months and of foreign languages), as well as some basic words for foods, articles of furniture, place names, etc. But sometimes misinterprets even simple lists (e.g., a TV schedule may be misinterpreted as a bus schedule, trip itinerary, list of items in a TV store, etc.). Can recognize basic grammatical structures when vocabulary is known or supplied (e.g., understands זה הסינגון שלי "this is my style" when סינגון "style" is supplied) and even extract meaning from a string of simple, connected sentences when context or background knowledge are supportive.

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from simple connected texts.

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to understand main ideas and/or some facts from the simplest connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs. Such texts are linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure, for example chronological sequencing. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make only minimal suppositions or to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples include messages with social purposes or information for the widest possible audience, such as public announcements and short, straightforward instructions dealing with public life. Some misunderstandings will occur.

Hebrew. Able to understand the main ideas and/or some details from simple connected texts on familiar topics. In letters, notes, dialogues and simple narratives, can identify the main topic, the main characters, and some of the details, mainly when verbs related to common daily functions are used (כתב "write," ישב "sit," נסע "travel," אכל "eat"). Fully understands simple sentences (4 מיליון "4,537,000 people live today in Israel" ו-537 אלף אנשים חיים היום בישראל). Successfully identifies and understands basic structures and vocabulary in longer passages to get the gist of the text by ignoring unfamiliar material. While contextual clues are sometimes used successfully, overreliance on such clues may at other times mislead the reader.

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience.

Hebrew. Good understanding of main idea and some details of simple advertisements and of short, factual, narrative texts (pointed, partially pointed, and unpointed) in familiar areas. Increasing comfort with Hebrew structure permits the reader to get meaning from unfamiliar expressions such as מדי יום "every day," יותר מאשר "more than," חכי אוהבת "favorite." The reader has a wider vocabulary (מפתח "key"; ארה"ב "U.S."; יהודים ומוסלימים "Jews and Muslims") and greater ability to infer meaning from unknown vocabulary by relying on context (an Intermediate-Mid reader who does not know the word תכשיטים "jewelry" may understand from the phrase כסף ותכשיטים "money and jewelry" that תכשיטים refers to some kind of valuables). Can interpret present, past and sometimes future tense of most regular and some common irregular verbs (נכנסנו לדירתנו "we moved into our apartment"; אנחנו מזמינים "we invite"; אחזור רק בערב "I will not return till evening"). Strong tendency to confuse cues with graphically similar but more familiar ones (reading דוד for דוד "uncle").

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. Can get some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and narration. Structural complexity may interfere with comprehension; for example, basic grammatical relations may be misinterpreted and temporal references may rely primarily on lexical items. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. While texts do not differ significantly from those at the Advanced

level, comprehension is less consistent. May have to read material several times for understanding.

Hebrew. Usually able to identify Who, What, When and Where in short connected texts on basic subjects. Can often get the gist of even longer paragraphs when expectations cued by the text are fulfilled. Consistently comprehends most details of simple informative texts such as non-technical advertisements, personal notes and messages. The Intermediate-High reader can identify most past, present, and future tense forms of frequent verbs in all verb patterns, and so can grasp the chronological sequence of events. Emerging but inconsistent ability to understand Advanced-level texts featuring description and narration.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by

- an ability to read with consistent understanding prose several paragraphs in length, dealing primarily with factual information and intended for the general reader; and
- in areas of special interest or knowledge, an increasing ability to understand parts of texts which are propositionally and linguistically more complex.

Advanced

Generic. Able to read somewhat longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly if presented with a clear underlying structure. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Reader gets the main ideas and facts and misses some details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language. Texts at this level include descriptions and narrations such as simple short stories, news items, biographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters and simple technical material written for the general reader.

Hebrew. Can understand multi-paragraph materials which include descriptions and narrations, such as news items, short stories, biographical information, short feature articles and the like, when logical development (story line, chronological sequence, or other rhetorical structure) is straightforward and the subject matter is familiar. Able to combine information extracted from various parts

of the text and make inferences and comparisons, but may miss some details. Sometimes misinterprets colloquialisms that sound comprehensible (e.g., חוזר הביתה בעשר אחת-עשרה "returns home around ten or eleven" may be interpreted as 10:11) and misreads cultural cues due to own background (e.g., an Advanced-level reader who sees בית-ספר חילוני "secular school" may understand it as "public school" because religious schools in America are all private).

Can fully comprehend the most important details of a wide range of advertisements (e.g., for a student organization, a language school, a hotel). Understands connective devices such as ולכן "therefore," עקב כך "as a result," למרות "although," אך "but." Has usually mastered the form of conditional and relative clauses as well as of the verbal tenses and other forms (infinitives, negative imperatives) of regular and frequent irregular verbs, but may still ignore obvious grammatical cues or seize a familiar vocabulary cue and thus misinterpret. Has a broader range of vocabulary (e.g., הסתגלות "adjustment"; מחקר "research"; גורמת "causes") and can comprehend texts containing nouns with possessive suffixes (תלמידיו "his students"; יכולתו "his ability") and other characteristics of a more formal style.

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to follow essential points of written discourse at the Superior level in areas of special interest or knowledge. Able to understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. Able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. A partial awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wider variety of texts, including literary. Misunderstandings may occur.

Hebrew. Can understand multi-paragraph texts within an increasing range of factual and familiar topics and, with uneven comprehension, abstract, hypothetical or other Superior-level texts as well. Understands most of the finer points of texts containing a wide variety of grammatical structures, e.g., has increased awareness of semantic relationships between forms of the same root realized in different verb patterns, and has fully mastered subordinate clauses at all different levels of complexity. Shows emerging but

inconsistent ability to understand different registers in written materials.

Superior

The Superior level is characterized by an ability to read, for information or for pleasure with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed, a wide variety of texts on a wide variety of topics.

Generic. Able to read with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed expository prose on unfamiliar subjects and a variety of literary texts. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although the reader is not expected to comprehend thoroughly texts which are highly dependent on knowledge of the target culture. Reads easily for pleasure. Superior-level texts feature hypotheses, argumentation and supported opinions and include grammatical patterns and vocabulary ordinarily encountered in academic/professional reading. At this level, due to the control of general vocabulary and structure, the reader is almost always able to match the meanings derived from extralinguistic knowledge with meanings derived from knowledge of the language, allowing for smooth and efficient reading of diverse texts. Occasional misunderstandings may still occur; for example, the reader may experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures and low-frequency idioms. At the Superior level the reader can match strategies, top-down or bottom-up, which are most appropriate to the text. (Top-down strategies rely on real-world knowledge and prediction based on genre and organizational scheme of the text. Bottom-up strategies rely on actual linguistic knowledge.) Material at this level will include a variety of literary texts, editorials, correspondence, general reports and technical material in professional fields. Rereading is rarely necessary, and misreading is rare.

Hebrew. Can read with close to full comprehension a wide array of texts, including a large selection of articles in Hebrew newspapers, which deal with abstract and unfamiliar topics. These texts may include hypothetical concepts and utilize argumentation and supported opinion. Able to understand selected unabridged and unadapted literary pieces with the help of a dictionary. Comfortable with a wider range of culture-specific material. Can read material which includes more sophisticated vocabulary, idioms, and metaphoric language (קביעות "tenure"; עוכרת ישראל understood as

"betrayer/destroyer of Israel"; הקבוץ כמוהו כטיפת מים המשקפת בהרכבה את כל מה שמצוי באוקינוס "The kibbutz is like a drop of water that reflects in its structure everything that is found in the ocean").

Unfamiliarity with infrequent vocabulary, misreading due to lack of vowels, confusion about semantic indicators, and lack of familiarity with some culture-specific material may still cause occasional unpatterned misunderstandings.

Distinguished

The Distinguished level is characterized by the ability to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language within comprehension that is achieved from within the cultural framework of the language and that includes appreciation of nuance and subtlety.

Generic. Able to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language pertinent to academic and professional needs. Able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all sociolinguistic and cultural references by processing language from within the cultural framework. Able to understand a writer's use of nuance and subtlety. Can readily follow unpredictable turns of thought and author intent in such materials as sophisticated editorials, specialized journal articles, and literary texts such as novels, plays, poems, as well as in any subject matter area directed to the general reader.

Hebrew. Able to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language pertinent to academic and professional needs. Understands most allusions in modern Hebrew literature from earlier sources. Sensitive to subtle nuances, and possesses sufficient knowledge of Israeli culture to follow virtually any colloquial or idiomatic usage intended for the general reader (e.g., ראש מועצה "council head" as roughly equivalent to small town mayor; ערבי כיתה "parties" rather than the apparent literal meaning of "night school"; מידת הדין and מידת החסד, terms from rabbinic literature referring to leniency or strictness).

Copy from print to script:

כשחזרתי הביתה ראיתי על הדלת פתק קטן מיוסף. הוא כתב שיש לי מכתב רשום בדואר.
נסעתי מיד לדואר ומצאתי שם איגרת מחוץ לארץ.

א) כשחזרתי הביתה ראיתי על הדלת
פתק קטן מיוסף.

ב) הוא כתב שיש לי מכתב רשום בדואר.

ג) נסעתי מיד לדואר ומצאתי שם
איגרת מחוץ לארץ.

Novice-Mid

Use each of the following words in a Hebrew sentence: I~new. "dining room," etc.]

א) אני אוהב אוכלים אוכל ב הדירה

ב) אני ולפה תארוחת שלי מנו יורק.

Novice-High

Tell about your roommate.

(Dina) שמה דינה.

היא מניו יורק. (New York)

היא סטודנטית.

היא לומדת בברנדייס. (Brandeis)

Write a note to your roommate, including questions.

שלום! איך קוראים לך? מה אתה לומד? איפה אתה גר?

מה שלומך?

שלי!

Complete:

In my refrigerator I have _

חלב
ביצים
גבינה

In my house there are _

שולחן
כסאות
מיטה-מיטות
ספרים

Write a note to your friend.

א) שלום ג'ף

אני יוסף. אני סטודנט
מ' ברנדייס. אני סטודנת טובה
והסרטים. יש לך אות קרה?
מה אותה סוגרת?

יוסף

Reply.

ב) שלום יוסף -
קר כאן, סטודנט ט. כאן,
יש לך קלנדר"ס וכוח. אבל כוח?
אין לי. יורק- כאן. שמח
עבודת וקאסטרו!

ג'ף

This year I want to –

ג) השנה אני רוצה ללמד ולשוחח
טוב בעברית שלי. גם אני רוצה
להיות רזה ושמן. [redacted] אין לי
שום בעיה... גם אני רוצה להיות כמו כה
כשהיה אני צריכה מחברים שלי.

A postcard from abroad

ה) שלום מ'מ'
אני בברי'ס אכשו. אני לומד
באוניברסיטה. אני יכול קורסו
בדפנית וכותב. מאין אתה? בברלס?
את סטודנטים או מורים? אני עושה
חדש.

שלום,
יונתן

Self-description

בת"ל, לוי אשרה-ניסן. ניו. המשיל. שם עכשיו.
לה אורטון. יליד בניו. המשיל ניו. המשיל אורטון. יליד
אורטון. יליד בניו. המשיל ניו.

A letter from Israel

שלום! מה שלומך? כמוני, אני בסדר גמור. אולפן נמאוד
וכשיר כבר הרבה מזמן כסטודנט. אני יודעת שלמדתי
הרבה מילים באולפן, ולפעמים קשה לדעת כמה. לפעמים
בעיתון חדשות חלפים. אני מתקוה שסטודנט הבא
שאני לומדת הרבה עברית אני אוהבת לדבר לפעמים
בעתות בעברית. אבל לפעמים, כשאני חברים עם ישראלים,
כיף לפעמים לדבר באנגלית. אני חושבת שאין לזה
סיבה גדולה, רק מפני שאני לפעמים מדברת ואני צריכה
לחשוב לפני אני מדברת. כבר לפעמים חושב
אני אוהבת את ישראל. לפעמים אני still fascinated
בעיות באולפן. אני לפעמים כועסת על ישראלים
exists כבר הניסים (miracle) קטן! אלף פעמים מזמן
שאולי אשוב באולפן, אפשר עכשיו אני לפעמים כבר
אני לפעמים יכולה לעבוד אף פעמים לפי אסבר עכשיו.
אני חושבת שאני כועסת להיות ... כי! נסעתי בחיצ
איך אומרים כבר עכשיו אני יודעת שפעמים קשה לאמר
כי עכשיו כאשר פעמים לפי הסדר.

שלום. ה'יום 26-3-95. אני מצטער
את כי מאחרת שלי. את קבלת מכתבי מאתי?
חשבתי שכתבתי לך, אפשר עכשיו אני פעמים יודעת. אני
עדיין כותבת. אני מקווה שבח"י שפעמים טוב.

בהתאות

Advanced

Response to a letter to the editor

יקרת נכבדה,

קראתי את המאמר שלך על
שפוך צרות שאני חושבת שצה
תשובה ללמיב שפות צרות וחשבתי
שהמאמר שלך היה טוב מאוד.
אני לא מסכימה על זה
שאת אני לא חושבת שאנשים או
תלמידים מדברים אנגלית לא
חושבים שהם לא יבלים לעשות רע
בקי שהם לא מדברים שפות צרות.
כיום יכלים לנסוע לארץ
צרה כמו ישראל ופוגשים אנשים
שמדברים אנגלית. כמה סטודנטים
ביכים ללמוד אנגלית בישראל. אבל
באוניברסיטה, רק אחוב קטן מבינים
או לומדים עברית. אלא לא מדברים
לבד/ עברית. צה יעבוד כל יבוקר
אנגלית כי בבוקר ארגון התלמידים
לומדים אנגלית.
הנקודה שלך על לומדים תרבות
משפות צרות חשובה מאוד ואני
מסכימה.
בברכה,

Advanced

I got back to school yesterday and –

אל שיחב ונחכור

ואוהבתי אבל... בה וזה בר. בשיב

בשיב בייתי. בישראל. ושבתי באוניברסיטה

פשיבה בירושלים. וכתבתי את שיעוריי. בר

לשבתי על בתיבות ישראלית ושפתי את בה.

פשהיו בחיי שלי שלום. אני באוהבת

ושבתי את אוהבת". ושבתי שפתי אוהבת.

אוהבת ושבים על כסף ושברים שבת

יכולת לשבת את בסף. ישראלי כת לא

כאשר בה בעבר שבים על בסף אבל

בעצמאות אני אשים. ואוהב כתוב

ובתרגיל מכתיב במבנה,
היה טוב לשאר ממין, ואחר כך ישבתי
כדי לדעת אם הכל בסדר אין פה בבדיחים.
הוא כתב שכבר בסדר, ושהוא
כל המשפחה שמו לבם על הברכה שלפני
זיף בפיזיקה שלפני. היה אז תמונת על
צמח. בתמונה בראשונה היה אחד ואחת
שכיוו בארץ ולא שמעתי ממנו בהבהה
אלוהי את המלכה מיכל. הוא אכ
בתוצלבה. כשלאחר דקות שמה שלח
אכ פתחתי אותו, ואמה תמונת לפני מן
אוויר." בכלל לא ידעתי מי שלח את המכתב.
את במעטפה, וראיתי שכתוב בו "דוד
מיוחס פתיבת-דואר. שלי. בדקתי
אתמול מכתבי לקמפוס וראיתי מכתב
אתמול מכתבי לקמפוס ו...

Superior

לאחר שנים רבות של מחשבה עמוקה שלך, גילית
שהוא שלם בקיום תלמודך! הקב"ה - ואילו עיניך מאמינות
כן מדבר הפילוסוף שמבקשים שלא רק ומיגל בשאלות שאין
להן מענה. לפעמים סיבות לתופעות במוצלח הפילוסופיה
ולחיינו בדרך כלל מובילים לשלושה, לאכזבה ולייאוש,
ולפילוסופיה. ולמה כך קורה? האדם - האדם
כמעט תמיד: "מי יודע"?
לפילוסופיה - בהתבוסס המוקדמות בימים הוא שהיחסי
מה כאן ועכשיו לכל בדיוק לשאול. שהיא: מה יודע
לשאול מדוע זה קורה בעולם. מה מניע בשלם? מדוע?
מוכן להקריב שלושה-רבעים כי אלה הם השאלות
עיקר אין מדוע, שלם בעולם יש רעה? בין-השאר:
בעיות: בעיית הרע - הסבל. בעיית הטוב - מה
בין-השאר לפילוסופיה יש? מה במה עסוק

Superior

בתשלה נדמה כי מלך-שמה מאחר כי

בתקום כלול יש זה מבול ! התעלים צוכאים

ז'כסיות שלהם לאחר מסה והפלל לזה מושלם-

שיומים.

הפרובוסנים נדברים על הם יהבי-

תפלתם לצאר שיבי-מצאר ובמנלים ומשולחם

ושיומים האחרונה על-צמוצ-

ולמחר בבוקר הם מתקדשים לפלל

ואחרי ההודעות הם מתקדשים בבתי-

הכנסיות שלהם. עליה היה יהודי, מלך בשדון,

ומלפני לקול: "בְּנֵי בְּנֵי, יש לנו בדיוק עשרים

דקות לפני שהם יתחילו לחשוב שאנחנו פחדנים."

HEBREW PROFICIENCY

GUIDELINES

Introduction

The Hebrew Proficiency Guidelines are based on the generic guidelines published in 1986 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). ACTFL describes the guidelines as

> a hierarchy of global characterizations of integrated performance in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Each description is a representative, not an exhaustive, sample of a particular range of ability, and each level subsumes all previous levels, moving from simple to complex in an "all-before-and-more" fashion.
>
> Because these guidelines identify stages of proficiency, as opposed to achievement, they are not intended to measure what an individual has achieved through specific classroom instruction but rather to allow assessment of what an individual can and cannot do, regardless of where, when, or how the language has been learned or acquired; thus, the words "learned" and "acquired" are used in the broadest sense. These guidelines are not based on a particular linguistic theory or pedagogical method, since the guidelines are proficiency-based, as opposed to achievement-based, and are intended to be used for global assessment.

It is especially important to bear in mind that the levels in the Guidelines are only partial descriptions of the characteristics of a range of performance. Thus, they are neither goals for teaching or curricular sequencing, nor absolute criteria for measuring learner outcomes. The Guidelines can be helpful in curriculum and test development; however, such usage has to be guided by a thorough understanding of the learning goals underlying the Guidelines. The statements and examples included in each level can only capture a small part of the conceptual, partial and full control of various linguistic and socio-linguistic characteristic of that specific level.

The Hebrew Guidelines are the result of a two-year project funded by a grant from the United States Department of Education, which was carried out during 1988-1990 by a national committee based at Brandeis University. The members of the committee were:

Shmuel Bolozky, University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Rivka Dori, Hebrew Union College (Los Angeles) and University of Southern California
Ruth Gollan, Brandeis University (Project Director)
Edna Grad, Northwestern University (first year)
Benjamin Hary, Emory University
Adina Ofek, Jewish Theological Seminary of America
Jonathan Paradise, University of Minnesota
Vardit Ringvald, Brandeis University (second year).

The Hebrew Guidelines, like the other language-specific guidelines developed to date, exemplify the characteristics of each level of the generic guidelines in a specific language. The guidelines for each skill provide a description of the functional linguistic behavior of non-native users of Modern Hebrew ranging from the total beginner (Novice-Low) to the person with "full professional competence in the language" (Superior) or, in the receptive skills of listening and reading, an even higher level of competence (Distinguished).

All the examples included in the Hebrew Guidelines are from data collected specifically for this project. An extensive analysis of Oral Proficiency Interviews as well as writing samples and listening and reading comprehension samples was conducted by the Hebrew Guidelines Committee over the two-year period of the grant.

While the Guidelines emphasize functional ability, examples of typical errors characteristic of the samples examined have also been included. The more detailed description of both strengths and weaknesses which may characterize each level should be helpful to those who will use the Guidelines as a basis for further research, rating and instruction. The descriptions of the Intermediate-High and Advanced-High levels have generally been kept shorter, with fewer or no examples, since these levels incorporate many of the significant features of both the preceding and the following ranges. The prominent characteristic of these two levels is the unevenness and lack of consistency of the performance. Often the person's performance appears to be at the next higher level, but just as often it sinks back to the one before.

An effort was made to obtain as broad and diverse a sample as possible within the time constraints of the project. However, additional research and, in particular, test development will be necessary in order to confirm that the samples are indeed representative and to explore the properties of the proficiency scale in greater depth.

Since its inception, the development of proficiency guidelines has been an ongoing, interactive process. No version of the guidelines is considered final or definitive. This first version of the Hebrew Guidelines should serve as a basis for a more general and objective description of proficiency in the four skills than has been possible in the past, and should facilitate the creation of proficiency-based tests and curricula. However, since the Guidelines are intended to help describe the proficiency of any non-native who has learned Hebrew in any kind of setting, and since large numbers of people learn Hebrew outside of university settings, further research and discussion leading to the refinement and revision of the Guidelines is essential. It is hoped that these Guidelines will facilitate such research and lead to productive discussions among professors of Hebrew. They should also facilitate cross-fertilization between researchers and instructors of Hebrew and those teaching other languages for which guidelines have already been developed.

The committee would like to acknowledge with gratitude the help of David Hiple of ACTFL, who has served as tester trainer and consultant to the committee since the inception of the project, and of these others who have provided assistance, guidance and suggestions during the course of the project: Roger Allen, University of Pennsylvania; Nancy Anderson, Educational Testing Service; Shulamit Bitran, Clark University; Heidi Byrnes, Georgetown University; Michael Carasik, staff assistant to the committee; Rina Donchin, University of Illinois; Vijai Gambhir, University of Pennsylvania; Yehiel Hayon, Ohio State University; Isabelle Kaplan, ACTFL; Samuel Livingston, ETS; Gilead Morahg, University of Wisconsin; Zila Naor, Brandeis University; Nissan Netzer, Bar-Ilan University; Raphael Nir, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Bonit Porath, Brandeis University; Asher Rivlin, Tel Aviv University and World Zionist Organization, New York; Meira Rom, Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Elana Shohamy, Tel Aviv University; Irene Thompson, George Washington University; Ronald Walton, National Foreign Language Center and University of Maryland; Leora Weinbach, Center for Education Technology, Tel Aviv; and Zehava Weizman, Harvard University.

The Generic Guidelines were revised and prepared by Heidi Byrnes; James Child; Nina Levinson; Pardee Lowe, Jr.; Seiichi Makino; Irene Thompson; and A. Ronald Walton.

For the convenience of those who do not read Hebrew, the committee this set of the Hebrew Guidelines has the examples transliterated into Roman characters. In both Writing and Reading the transcription reflects, for the most part, Hebrew orthography:

thus, שׂ (*ś*) is distinguished from ס (*s*) and ב (*v*) from ו (*w*). Doubling is also indicated. The transcription of Speaking and Listening reflects speakers' usage of the language; therefore, there is no distinction between כ and ח (both *x*); כ and פ (both *k*), etc. Moreover, there is no marking of א or ע.

The sign * denotes an error.

SPEAKING

All the examples are taken from recorded oral interviews conducted for this project.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material.

Novice-Low

Generic. Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high-frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.

Hebrew. No functional ability to communicate in Hebrew. Oral production is limited to several isolated words or expressions, such as *šalom* "hi," *ani* "I," *ken* "yes," *lo* "no," *toda* "thanks," and familiar loanwords from Jewish/Israeli culture such as "Shabbat," "chutzpa," "pita," "aliyah," "kibbutz."

Novice-Mid

Generic. Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers may be understood only with great difficulty.

Hebrew. No significant functional ability to communicate in Hebrew. Primarily reactive; intelligible only to sympathetic listeners.

Oral production is limited to repetition of interviewer's input or memorized utterances. Functions are limited to some courtesy formulas (*ma šlomxa*? "how are you?"; *naim meod* "pleased to meet you"), listing and enumerating, and simple, mostly memorized phrases and sentences (*ani gara be-boston* "I live in Boston"; *ani ohevet pitsa* "I like pizza"). Content may consist of common lexical items related to people (*aba* "father"; *ima* "mother", *talmid* "student", *xaver* "friend"); objects and places (*kise* "chair"; *šulxan* "table", *xeder* "room", *kita* "class"); food (*tapuz* "orange"; *lexem* "bread"; *dag* "fish"); days of the week (*yom šiši* "Friday"; *yom rišon* "Sunday"); numbers 1-10; and loan words such as *universita*, *hamburger*, *kafe*.

Speech is characterized by long pauses, frequent groping for words, use of first language, few adjectives, lack of agreement between subject and verb and inaccurate use of personal pronouns. The Novice-Mid speaker may have a surprisingly large vocabulary of isolated words and phrases acquired through the study of Jewish culture. However, knowledge of these lexical items does not increase functional ability in the language.

Novice-High

Generic. Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple recombinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centers on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent and, in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.

Hebrew. Emerging, but not sustained ability to engage in basic communicative exchanges, mainly through recombination or expansion of learned material (*hem gam rotsim lilmod anglit*, "They want to study English too"; *ani ovedet bauniversita*, "I work at the university"). Content is still usually limited to a few topics, concerning self and immediate surroundings such as food, the family, the classroom (*hamišpaxa šeli gara be* ..., "My family lives in ..."; *ani holexet lemuzeon*, "I am going to a museum"). Creativity is reflected in the emerging ability to ask some questions, cope with simple

survival situations such as ordering a basic meal, inviting someone over, or buying a ticket. Most statements are in the present tense. Occasional use of simple adverbs of time (*axšav* "now," *hayom* "today") and space (*šam* "there," *po* "here") and partial control of conjunctions (*ani ohev ivrit, gam anglit* "I like Hebrew, English too") add some detail to the Novice-High speaker's sentences.

However, errors are frequent and may include improper use of the infinitive (*ani rotsa *kotevet sipurim*, "I want to *write stories") and lack of agreement in number (*xaverim *tov*, "good [sg.] *friends [pl.]") or gender (*ima *omer*, "Mother [f.] *says [m.]"). Speakers may have difficulty in producing sounds not found in the first language. Communication even with sympathetic interlocutors may be difficult.

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode;
- initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; and
- ask and answer questions.

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task-oriented and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions, and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstanding frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Hebrew. Able to engage in some simple conversations such as introductions, greetings, invitations, expressions of likes and dislikes, and obtaining information in order to fulfill immediate needs. Uses a limited number of simple sentences, mostly one or two at a time; most are still reactive and repeat part of the question. Limited but sustained creativity is reflected in the ability to ask and answer

simple questions (*eyfo at ovedet?* "Where do you work?"; *kama ze ole?,* "How much does it cost?") and combine known elements to say things with a measure of spontaneity. Able to survive uncomplicated daily situations such as buying a bus ticket, asking for directions, or ordering food in a restaurant.

The Intermediate-Low speaker attempts to carry on conversations, mostly on topics such as everyday activities (*ani ohevet likro velixtov*, "I like to read and write"; *ani oved ki ani rotse kesef*, "I work because I want money"), the family, friends and other narrowly defined familiar topics.

Errors resulting in miscommunication frequently occur, but with repetition the speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, who would understand responses like the following: *ani lo *sameax ki ani rotsa šehašem šeli *ivrit xaya*, "I (f.) am not happy (m.), because I want my Hebrew name (to be) Chaya"; *hi *lilmod ivrit gam, *lamad im *ani*, "She *studied Hebrew too, she *studied with *me."

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask and answer questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs: e.g., personal history and leisure-time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may still be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Hebrew. Able to maintain a variety of uncomplicated face-to-face conversations in highly predictable surroundings. More interactive and creative than the previous level. Produces strings or lists of sentences in sequence, though still not in utterances of paragraph length. Emerging ability to use the past tense. Topics are similar to those of the Intermediate-Low level, but with increased quantity and quality of speech. Examples: *yeš harbe anašim šeomrim šewašington makom tov meod*, "There are many people who say that Washington is a very good place"; *haima šeli hi gam lo ohevet et hanaalaim šeli*,

"My mother does not like my shoes either"; *hayom yafe meod, ktsat kar, aval yafe*, "It's a nice day today, a bit cold, but nice." Able to handle a variety of survival situations.

Can get information by asking simple questions such as *lama at bat leamerika?* "Why did you come to America?", *ben kama hayeled šelax?* "How old is your son?", *ma at osa kan?* "What are you doing here?", *eyfo at ovedet?* "Where do you work?", *matay bat launiversita?* "When did you come to the university?", *meain ata ba?* "Where do you come from?.

Errors may include lack of agreement and failure to use the construct state (*ani lo xoševet šeani *karov *lemišpaxa hadodim*, "I don't think that I am *close to the uncles' *family"); inaccuracies in verbal forms (**kanati*, "I *bought"); incorrect word order (*profesor *meaxer universita*, "professor from *another university"); and incorrect use of the definite article. In responses to questions, often uses question markers as conjunctions (*ani lo lomed *matai ani holex laavoda*, "I don't study *when I go to work").

Such mistakes usually do not prevent the Intermediate-Mid speaker from being understood by a sympathetic interlocutor.

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Can initiate, sustain, and close a general conversation with a number of strategies appropriate to a range of circumstances and topics, but errors are evident. Limited vocabulary still necessitates hesitation and may bring about slightly unexpected circumlocution. There is emerging evidence of connected discourse, particularly for simple narration and/or description. The Intermediate-High speaker can generally be understood even by interlocutors not accustomed to dealing with speakers at this level, but repetition may still be required.

Hebrew. Able to handle successfully most uncomplicated communicative tasks and social situations. Emerging but not sustained ability to narrate and describe simple activities and situations in connected speech, using a variety of the more frequent conjunctions, such as *o* "or," *ve-* "and," *aval* "but," *mipne še-* "because," *lifne še-* "before," *keše-* "when" (*... ze nose kaše meod, aval yeš dvarim laasot....*, "... This is a difficult subject, but there are things to be done...."). Accuracy of expression is increased through correct use of the infinitive and of common verbs in the past tense. Emerging ability to express future time (*ani mitkonen linsoa habayta*

baxofeš, "I'm planning to go home during vacation"), with some difficulty in the use of morphological future forms. Can occasionally express opinions in simple terms and handle situations with some complications. Is becoming less dependent on sympathetic interlocutors.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- converse in a clearly participatory fashion;
- initiate, sustain and bring to closure a wide variety of communicative tasks, including those that require an increased ability to convey meaning with diverse language strategies due to a complication or an unforeseen turn of events;
- satisfy the requirements of school and work situations;
- narrate and describe with paragraph-length connected discourse.

Advanced

Generic. Able to satisfy the requirements of everyday situations and routine school and work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility complicated tasks and social situations, such as elaborating, complaining, and apologizing. Can narrate and describe with some details, linking sentences together smoothly. Can communicate facts and talk casually about topics of current public and personal interest, using general vocabulary. Shortcomings can often be smoothed over by commmunicative strategies, such as pause fillers, stalling devices, and different rates of speech. Circumlocution which arises from vocabulary or syntactic limitations very often is quite successful, though some groping for words may still be evident. The Advanced-level speaker can be understood without difficulty by native interlocutors.

Hebrew. Able to satisfy routine social demands and school or work requirements. Increasing control of subordinate clauses as well as common verb patterns, gender, number, subject/verb and noun/adjective agreement permits the Advanced speaker to narrate, describe and compare in complete though simple paragraphs (*axar kax ani tsarix liknot* ... "afterwards I need to buy ... "; *im tavoi* "If you come"; *hu xošev še* "He thinks that"; *kešebikarti baarets* "When I visited Israel"). Can state an opinion--not yet fully supported--on

topics of general interest such as current issues and events, politics, sports, the weather, social issues. Can handle situations with a complication, such as being stranded at the airport, losing documents, being late to work, or returning a purchase for a refund. Is often able to resort to circumlocution and other communication strategies when specific vocabulary fails.

Good control of most common prepositions, including those governed by frequently used verbs, and of inflected prepositions, leads to greater clarity: *omer le* "says to"; *medaber im* "speaks with"; *more leivrit* "a teacher of Hebrew"; *li* "to me," *iti* "with me," *al yadi* "next to me." Errors may be caused by interference from native language, e.g. *ozer *et* "help" + *direct object; **al yom rišon* "*on Sunday"; *medaber *le* "speak *to"; *garti *al hakibuts* "I lived *on the kibbutz."

Other errors may include occasional realization in the wrong verb pattern such as **lavašnu* "we *dressed [trans.]" for *hitlabašnu* "we got dressed" and *haxanut *sogeret* "the store *closes [trans.]" instead of *nisgeret* "closes [intrans.]" and gender/number errors (*milim *kašim* "*hard words"; **ze haarets* "*This is the land"). But such errors rarely lead to misunderstandings in communication with native speakers.

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to satisfy the requirements of a broad variety of everyday, school, and work situations. Can discuss concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. There is emerging evidence of ability to support opinions, explain in detail, and hypothesize. The Advanced-High speaker often shows a well developed ability to compensate for an imperfect grasp of some forms with confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing and circumlocution. Differentiated vocabulary and intonation are effectively used to communicate fine shades of meaning. The Advanced-High speaker often shows remarkable fluency and ease of speech but under the demands of Superior-level, complex tasks language may break down or prove inadequate.

Hebrew. Able to converse in a clearly participatory fashion and to satisfy the requirements of a variety of everyday, school, work or social situations. Increase in quality and quantity of Advanced tasks or functions. Greater accuracy in use of prepositions, subordinate clauses, verb forms and gender agreement. Partial but inconsistent ability to hypothesize (using ilu "if" and the appropriate verb tenses),

support opinions, handle abstractions in extended discourse, and otherwise perform at the Superior level. Some groping for words and other mistakes still occur as well, especially when discussing unfamiliar topics or attempting to use more specific or sophisticated vocabulary (e.g., "veterinarian," "district attorney," "decline in the ability"; *adam šemeašen omer šeze pogea *bexofšiut šelo* ... "a man who smokes says that it impinges on his *freedom ..."). Patterned errors also appear, but they are more likely to be idiosyncratic to the particular speaker than characteristic of Advanced-High speaking in general.

Superior

The superior level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:

- participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics; and
- support opinions and hypothesize using native-like discourse strategies.

Generic. Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, professional, and abstract topics. Can discuss special fields of competence and interest with ease. Can support opinions and hypothesize, but may not be able to tailor language to audience or discuss in depth highly abstract or unfamiliar topics. Usually the Superior-level speaker is only partially familiar with regional or other dialectical variants. The Superior-level speaker commands a wide variety of interactive strategies and shows good awareness of discourse strategies. The latter involves the ability to distinguish main ideas from supporting information through syntactic, lexical and suprasegmental features (pitch, stress, intonation). Sporadic errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures and some complex high-frequency structures more common to formal writing, but no patterns of errors are evident. Errors do not disturb the native speaker or interfere with communication.

Hebrew. Able to speak the language with sufficient accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social and professional matters. Can discuss a broad range of concrete as well as abstract topics, including unfamiliar ones, in extended and connected discourse. Can handle unfamiliar situations, support opinions, and hypothesize, using *ilu* and *ilmale* "if" and the

appropriate verb forms. Functional mastery of the verb and noun patterns (*binyanim* and *miškalim*). Some ability to shift registers appropriately (*yeš lanu bevet hasefer yeladim yotsim min haklal, mamaš yotsey dofen*, "We have some [idiomatic equivalent of] **really extraordinary** kids in our school"). Uses idiomatic expressions (*lo ala beyadenu limnoa* "**we did not manage** to prevent"; *histakalti bo šaa aruka*, "I looked at him **for a long while**"; *hi šimša betafkidim xašuvim*, "She **held** important jobs ... ").

No patterned errors and no groping for words. Unpatterned errors may still occur (e. g., **tofesim* "*forms"; **kemo šeeyn lo bayit* "*as (if) he doesn't have a home"; *ze *lama yeš hevdel* "that's *why there's a difference"; *haim at rotsa *lehitpageš velesoxeax?* "Would you like *to get together and talk?"). Such errors may clearly distinguish the Superior speaker as a non-native, but they do not interfere with communication or disturb the native speaker.

LISTENING

The Hebrew Listening Guidelines are based on data collected by the Hebrew Guidelines Committee through a listening comprehension test, Oral Proficiency Interviews and classroom observation. The test was recorded on audio tape and it included both unmodified recordings of news broadcasts and simulated authentic dialogues. Additional research will be necessary in order to develop the test fully and to collect data based on a wider variety of listening tasks.

These guidelines assume that all the listening segments are delivered at a normal pace of speech with natural intonation and stress patterns. The ability of listeners at the lower end of the scale can be enhanced or hampered by the existence of different listening conditions such as slowed or rapid speech, repetition, a familiar or unfamiliar accent, visual cues, background noise, the age of the speaker, etc.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to recognize learned material and isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context.

Novice-Low

Generic. Understanding is limited to occasional isolated words, such as cognates, borrowed words, and high-frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.

Hebrew. No practical understanding of spoken Hebrew. Understanding is limited to occasional familiar words, e.g.: borrowed words (*universita, kafe, kafeterya, kontsert, muzeon*); social conventions (*šalom, ken* "yes," *lo* "no," *toda* "thank you"); terminology acquired through religious or cultural contexts (*šana tova* "Happy New Year," *šofar*); and occasional other isolated words or phrases. Even these terms are usually recognized only when heard in isolation and very clearly enunciated in fully specified contexts.

Novice-Mid

Generic. Able to understand some short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends some words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae about topics that refer to basic personal information or the immediate physical setting. The listener requires long pauses for assimilation and periodically requests repetition and/or a slower rate of speech.

Hebrew. Able to understand some memorized words and phrases or simple questions (*ata rotse sukar?* "Do you want sugar?"; *kafe o te?* "Coffee or tea?") when strongly supported by context and clearly enunciated. Understanding is limited to familiar context areas such as the family (*aba* "father," *ima* "mother," *mišpaxa* "family," *ax* "brother," *axot* "sister"), home, food, school, some numbers (1-10), common courtesy formulae (*boker tov* "good morning," *bevakaša* "please/you're welcome," *ma nišma?* "What's up?" *naim meod* "pleased to meet you"), and high-frequency commands (*kax* "take," *šev* "sit," *ten* "give," *bo* "come," *lex* "go"). Familiar context or vocabulary facilitates comprehension of a surrounding phrase; e.g., "Does X live in New York?" may be understood because of the familiar names and/or the intonation.

The Novice-Mid listener may require frequent repetition or rewording even of most simple questions (*meain ata?* "Where are you from?"; *mi ze?* "Who is it?"; *eyfo habait šelxa?* "Where is your home?"). Misunderstandings arise even with most common

questions, such as confusion of *ma šimxa?* "What is your name?" and *ma šlomxa?* "How are you?" Listener may require long pauses for assimilation.

Novice-High

Generic. Able to understand short, learned utterances and some sentence-length utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae. May require repetition, rephrasing and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension.

Hebrew. Able to understand short, memorized phrases and some sentence-length utterances (*ani xole hayom* "I'm sick today") in face-to-face conversations, particularly when strongly supported by pictures, gestures, or other context, and when speech is very clear. Comprehends some basic questions (*matay hašiur leivrit?* "When is Hebrew class?"; *ma ata ose?* "What are you doing?"), statements (*yeš li šiur ivrit baboker* "I have Hebrew class in the morning") and high-frequency commands (*ten li sefer* "Give me a book") found in daily behavior involving family, school, leisure time activities and other familiar areas. May require repetition, rephrasing and/or slow, careful speech for comprehension. Minor modifications caused by word inflection are enough to render a familiar word unrecognizable (*katan/ktana* "small [m./f.]," *kaxol/kxula* "blue [m./f.]," etc.).

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from interactive exchanges and simple connected aural texts.

The Intermediate level is characterized by the listener's ability to:

- understand complete sentences;
- understand compound sentences in familiar contexts;
- catch the gist of longer utterances in familiar contexts which allow for a high probability of correct guessing from a minimum of word clues.

Comprehension is degraded when the listener is pressured by the need to provide a spoken response or by listening to speech

which cannot be repeated or altered (e.g., radio, telephone answering machine).

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned elements in a limited number of content areas, particularly if strongly supported by the situational context. Content refers to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and routine tasks, such as getting meals and receiving simple instructions and directions. Listening tasks pertain primarily to spontaneous face-to-face conversations. Understanding is often uneven; repetition and rewording may be necessary. Misunderstandings in both main ideas and details arise frequently.

Hebrew. Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned/acquired elements in a limited number of context areas: school, restaurant (*ma ata rotse leexol?* "What would you like to eat?") home (*yeš sapa al yad hašulxan* "There is a sofa next to the table"), lodging (*yeš kan bet malon?* "Is there a hotel here?"), transportation, simple directions, time (*ma hašaa?* "What time is it?") and weather (*hayom kar meod* "It's really cold today"). Understands the gist of simple face-to-face conversations and instructions given by a sympathetic speaker. Some repetition and rewording is still usually necessary for comprehension. Misunderstandings in both main ideas and details arise frequently.

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to understand sentence-length utterances which consist of recombinations of learned utterances on a variety of topics. Content continues to refer primarily to basic personal background and needs, social conversations and somewhat more complex tasks, such as lodging, transportation, and shopping. Additional content areas include some personal interests and activities, and a greater diversity of instructions and directions. Listening tasks not only pertain to spontaneous face-to-face conversations but also to short routine telephone conversations and some deliberate speech, such as simple announcements and reports over the media. Understanding continues to be uneven.

Hebrew. Sufficient comprehension to understand simple face-to-face and some overheard conversations about topics beyond basic survival needs (e.g., personal history, sports, social life, hobbies). Evidence of ability to recognize basic constructions which allow for discrimination between male and female, singular and plural, present and sometimes future and past. The Intermediate-Mid listener often understands questions such as *haim ata ohev mezeg avir xam?* "Do you like hot weather?"; *ma taase kešetigmor lilmod bauniversita?* "What will you do when you finish college?" if the question is anticipated. Able to comprehend short routine phone conversations and some deliberate speech on simple tape-recordings. Can sometimes get main idea, but no details, from a conversation on unfamiliar topics.

Understanding continues to be uneven; repetition and rewording may still be necessary. May sometimes have difficulty even with simple questions (*ma asita baxofeš?* "What did you do during vacation?"; *ma taase bakayits* "What will you do this summer?") when they are not set in a suitable context.

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to sustain understanding over longer stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics pertaining to different times and places; however, understanding is inconsistent to due failure to grasp main ideas and/or details. Thus, while topics do not differ significantly from those of an Advanced-level listener, comprehension is less in quantity and poorer in quality.

Hebrew. Comprehends longer stretches of connected discourse on a number of topics which are not limited to a single context of time or place, e.g., narrative about what happened on a camping trip or about someone's future plans. Increasing ability to use contextual, lexical, grammatical and other clues to grasp partially understood sentences (e.g., the listener figures out *ironi/t* "urban, urbanite" from *ir* "city"). Greater understanding of conceptual words in general (*tahor* "pure," *dmuyot* "characters," *ofi* "character, nature"). Topics do not differ significantly from those of the Advanced listener, but understanding is inconsistent due to failure to grasp all details.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a

variety of factual topics beyond the immediacy of the situation, including some topics where comprehension is complicated due to an unexpected sequence of events.

Generic. Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation. Comprehension may be uneven due to a variety of linguistic and extralinguistic factors, among which topic familiarity is very prominent. These texts frequently involve description and narration in different time frames or aspects, such as present, nonpast, habitual, or imperfective. Texts may include interviews, short lectures on familiar topics, and news items and reports dealing primarily with factual information. Listener is aware of cohesive devices but may not be able to use them to follow the sequence of thought in an oral text.

Hebrew. Able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the most concrete, factual situations. Able to anticipate the flow of the utterance sufficiently to fill in the speaker's pauses correctly. Can understand most face-to-face speech of a native speaker when spoken at a normal rate of speed. Can get the gist of a factual radio report on a familiar subject and of a television report even on a less familiar topic.

Listener is aware of some, but not all, cohesive devices (e.g., *ilmale* "if only ... not," *lamrot še-* "although," *af al pi še-* "despite the fact that," *leumat zot* "on the other hand," *karov levaday še-* "it's almost certain that," *beħašvaa le-* "compared to") but may not be able to use them to follow the sequence of thought. Mostly unable to follow animated speech of two or more speakers who speak "on top" of each other or through background noise. Will not recognize known words in rapid speech when elided with preceding or succeeding words (e.g., *a* for *ha* "the," *ta* for *et ha* [direct object marker]).

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to understand the main ideas of most speech in a standard dialect; however, the listener may not be able to sustain comprehension in extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex. Listener shows an emerging awareness of culturally implied meanings beyond the surface meanings of the text but may fail to grasp socio-cultural nuances of the message.

Hebrew. Can comprehend the formal speech in use on Israeli radio, despite the lack of visual clues. In face-to-face conversations, able to understand a more elevated or idiomatic style, e.g.: *yeš bexax i-tsedek mešavea* "this constitutes a glaring injustice"; *linkot baemtsaim* "to take steps"; *yeš texuša šehamatsav agum* "There is a feeling that the situation is gloomy." Word order and other syntactic features of written Hebrew (e.g., nouns with possessive endings, infinitive plus direct object suffix) do not cause breakdown.

Listener shows an emerging awareness of culturally implied meaning beyond the surface meaning of the text but may fail to grasp socio-cultural nuances of the message (e.g., *lehasik maskanot*, literally "to draw conclusions," which in an Israeli political context is understood to mean that the one drawing the conclusions should resign his post). Can distinguish expressions in other registers (slang, biblical or rabbinic Hebrew) but may not always be able to comprehend them (e.g., *linhog eyfa veeyfa* "to discriminate between").

Superior

The Superior level is characterized by an ability to understand concrete and abstract topics in extended discourse offered by speakers using native-like discourse strategies.

Generic. Able to understand the main ideas of all speech in a standard dialect, including technical discussion in a field of specialization. Can follow the essentials of extended discourse which is propositionally and linguistically complex, as in academic/professional settings, in lectures, speeches, and reports. Listener shows some appreciation of aesthetic norms of target language, of idioms, colloquialisms, and register shifting. Able to make inferences within the cultural framework of the target language. Understanding is aided by an awareness of the underlying organization structure of the oral text and includes sensitivity for its social and cultural references and its affective overtones. Rarely misunderstands but may not understand excessively rapid, highly colloquial speech or speech that has strong cultural references.

Hebrew. Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all standard speech, including telephone calls, radio broadcasts, films and theater plays, editorials and reports, academic and professional discussions and lectures within own area of expertise, non-technical

public policy statements, some literary readings, and some jokes, puns and idioms.

May still have difficulty with technical language (especially outside own field of specialization), very formal high register, biblical expressions, slang (e.g., may take *yatsatem mize?* literally as "Did you get out of it?" rather than colloquially as "Had you gotten out of the habit?") or very rapid speech. Sporadic, non-predictable failure to understand vocabulary, especially out of context, can still be expected.

Distinguished

The Distinguished level is characterized by an ability to understand most linguistic styles and forms from within the cultural framework of the language.

Generic. Able to understand all forms and styles of speech pertinent to personal, social and professional needs tailored to different audiences. Shows strong sensitivity to social and cultural references and aesthetic norms by processing language from within the cultural framework. Texts include theater plays, screen productions, editorials, symposia, academic debates, public policy statements, literary readings, and most jokes and puns. May have difficulty with some dialects and slang.

Hebrew. Able to understand with ease most forms and styles of speech related to personal, social and professional needs. Can understand and often identify the accents of immigrants from various countries. Is sensitive to mimicking, shifts in register, literary/religious references and nuance in general in forms as varied as cafe conversation, political speeches, and comedy routines. Will experience difficulty mainly when faced with rapid or emotionally charged speech or speech containing a relatively large proportion of unfamiliar slang or other in-group terms.

WRITING

The writing guidelines and all the examples given are based on samples of students' writing collected at the participating institutions. A variety of in-class and out-of-class, timed and untimed assignments were included in the analysis. No dictionaries were used in in-class assignments, and the question of the

progressive development of dictionary use in writing was not investigated.

Samples at each of the levels described are appended to the Guidelines. It remains for future data gathering and analysis to confirm that the samples used are indeed representative.

The following criteria (not necessarily in order of importance) were considered in formulating the level descriptions:

- functional tasks
- topic and treatment
- length of sentences and length of the sample
- relationship between the sentences
- frequency of vocabulary lapses
- naturalness of idiom, style and register
- grammatical control
- syntax
- spelling.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to produce isolated words and phrases.

Novice-Low

Generic. Able to form some letters in alphabetic system. In languages whose writing systems use syllabaries or characters, writer is able to both copy and produce the basic strokes. Can produce romanization of isolated characters, where applicable.

Hebrew. Able to copy parts of printed text into script. In some cases, also able to write own name and a few isolated memorized words such as *šalom* and *yiśra'el*, but not always accurately. Many errors exist in formation of letters, e.g., *pe'* may be inverted; letters that resemble each other (such as *waw*, *yod*, final *nun*; *he'*, *ḥeyt*, *taw*) are frequently confused.

Novice-Mid

Generic. Able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases and reproduce some from memory. No practical communicative writing skills.

Hebrew. Able to copy most letters from print to script accurately and can write (sometimes inaccurately) a small number of familiar

words such as *bayit* "house," *'aruḥat boqer* "breakfast," *ḥadaš* "new." Can produce simple sentences which consist of learned words and phrases. No practical communicative writing skills. Has fairly complete control of sound-symbol correlation, but without distinguishing between homophones (*samex/śin*, *taw/ṭeyt*, *veyt/waw*). Writes words known from speech mostly phonetically (e.g. *maḥ *šimḥa* "What's your name?" with *ḥeyt* instead of *xaf*; **zot* for *zo't* "this").

Novice-High

Generic. Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material and some recombinations thereof. Can supply information on simple forms and documents. Can write names, numbers, dates, own nationality, and other simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system or 50-100 characters or compounds in a character writing system. Spelling and representation of symbols (letters, syllables, characters) may be partially correct.

Hebrew. The ability to communicate in writing begins to appear at this level. Can create short lists of words related to self and immediate environment, e.g., basic biographical information, shopping lists, lists of courses, etc. Can recombine memorized materials into simple statements, short descriptive sentences or basic questions. However, word order is frequently incorrect (**'aḥat morah* "a teacher"), and pronouns are often omitted in the present tense (*maḥ * kotevet* "what are you writing?").

Occasionally still mixes written and printed letters, particularly where the differences are slight (e.g., *gimel* and *zayin*). Some letters may be formed incorrectly (e.g., *mem*, *pe'*, final *fe'*, final *tsadi*) or confused with each other (*ḥeyt*, *xaf*; *ḥeyt*, *he'*). Non-final forms of the letters *kaf*, *mem*, *nun*, *pe'* and *tsadi* are sometimes used at the end of a word. Spelling errors are frequent, especially in the case of homophones (e.g., *qaṭan* "little" with *kaf* instead of *qof* or *taw* instead of *ṭeyt*) and representations of vowels (e.g., **'eyfow* instead of *'eyfoh* "where?").

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to meet practical writing needs by communicating simple facts and ideas in a loose collection of sentences.

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Can write short messages, postcards, and take down simple notes, such as telephone messages. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences on very familiar topics. Language is inadequate to express in writing anything but elementary needs. Frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and in formation of nonalphabetic symbols, but writing can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Some ability to recombine learned material creatively into short sentences on familiar topics, and to create simple questions as well. Topics are specific and closely tied to limited language experience, e.g., daily life, things I like to do, objects in the immediate environment and their description by means of basic adjectives: nice, good, big, new. Verbs are usually in the present and occasionally the past, but not always used accurately.

Frequent errors in grammar, especially lack of gender/number agreement (*misʿadah *ṭov* "a good restaurant"; *ʾanašim *ṭov* "good people"), are characteristic of this level. There is regular use of English (in English or Hebrew characters) where vocabulary is lacking.

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to meet a number of practical writing needs. Can write short, simple letters. Content involves personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in personal experience. Can express present time or at least one other time frame or aspect consistently, e.g., nonpast, habitual, imperfective. Evidence of control of the syntax of noncomplex sentences and basic inflectional morphology, such as declensions and verb patterns. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments on a given topic and provides little evidence of

conscious organization. Can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to meet an increasing number of practical writing needs. Most writing tends to be a collection of sentences without complex subordinate clauses. The writer primarily uses the present tense and occasionally the past. The future is mostly expressed by use of adverbs (e.g., *baššanah habba'ah* "next year"; *maḥar* "tomorrow") with present tense verbs. There is emerging accuracy in spelling. In general, the writing reflects the writer's speaking ability and the subjects s/he is familiar with. Tasks may include notes, short letters and descriptions of personal activities and surroundings. Typical topics would be school, work, friends, the family, etc. Able to express feelings and desires, report on current activities and ask for information in a very basic fashion. Writing at this level can be comprehended by a sympathetic reader who is used to the writing of non-natives. There is emerging use of circumlocution to overcome limitations in vocabulary (e.g., *'ani rotseh *lixtov lax todah rabbah* "I want to write you 'many thanks'" instead of *'ani rotseh lehodot lax* "I want to thank you").

Word order is often incorrect; it is usually derived from the native language, e.g., **'arox zman* "a long time"; **psixologyah ḥug* "Psychology Department." There are continued mistakes in gender and number agreement and in the use of the definite article (*hakkitah *gedolah lomedet* "the big class learns" instead of *hakkitah haggedolah*). The writer may still sometimes resort to an English word, spelled in Hebrew characters, when Hebrew vocabulary fails: **frans* for "France," **'eqonomiqah* for "economics." Under the influence of the native language, connectives may be kept separate from the words to which they should be attached (**we halaxti* "and I went"; **keše ba'ah* "when she came").

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to meet most practical writing needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics and respond in writing to personal questions. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data, work and school experience. In those languages relying primarily on content words and time expressions to express time, tense, or aspect, some precision is displayed; where tense and/or aspect is expressed through verbal inflection, forms are produced rather consistently, but not always accurately. An ability to describe and narrate in

paragraphs is emerging. Rarely uses basic cohesive elements, such as pronominal substitutions or synonyms in written discourse. Writing, though faulty, is generally comprehensible to natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to meet most practical and some social writing needs on topics related to the writer's immediate environment, such as biographical details, school and work. Some of the characteristics of the Intermediate-Mid level are still found at this level; however, both in the nature of functions and in the quality and quantity of the writer's output many of the characteristics of the Advanced level are already displayed. The Intermediate-High writer is able to take brief notes on familiar topics and to respond in writing to personal questions. Emerging ability to describe with some precision and to narrate in paragraphs. The writer demonstrates full control of simple sentences and uses more complex sentences linked by conjunctions, though the correct conjunction is not always chosen. Signs of better organizational ability begin to appear, but most writing still reflects the writer's speech.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by an ability to write narratives and descriptions of a factual nature of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics.

Advanced

Generic. Able to write routine social correspondence and join sentences in simple discourse of at least several paragraphs in length on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, write cohesive summaries and resumes, as well as narratives and descriptions of a factual nature. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express self simply with some circumlocution. May still make errors in punctuation, spelling, or the formation of nonalphabetic symbols. Good control of the morphology and the most frequently used syntactic structures, e.g., common word order patterns, coordination, subordination, but makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices, such as pronouns, accurately. Writing may resemble literal translations from the native language, but a sense of organization

(rhetorical structure) is emerging. Writing is understandable to natives not used to the writing of nonnatives.

Hebrew. Able to write texts of several paragraphs in length, narrating, describing, and providing information on familiar, factual topics such as current events, social life, work and use of leisure time. Contexts include longer letters and short essays on personal experiences or personal reactions to events. The writer can perform more complex writing tasks such as expressing emotions and opinions (not yet fully supported), making comparisons, taking notes, writing summaries and the like. Organizational ability is evident, and vocabulary is sufficient for the writer to express self adequately with some circumlocution. There is good control of verb morphology in all tenses for common verbs, and the infinitive is correctly used. The writer also uses coordinate sentences with *we* "and," *ʾo* "or," and *ʾaval* "but." Use of subordination, though sometimes flawed, is also common. Future forms of the verb are used, but not always accurately, particularly in irregular verbs (e.g., **ʾensaʿ* I will go"). Emerging ability to use *ʿim* and *ʾillu* ("if") + verbs to hypothesize.

The correct verbal root is sometimes used in the wrong verb pattern (**rašamti laqqursim* "I registered [trans.] for classes" instead of *niršamti* "I registered [intrans.]") or even in a pattern where that root is not found at all (**naqiti* instead of *niqqiti* "I cleaned"). The Advanced writer still often misuses or omits some prepositions, the relative particle *še-*, and conjunctions (especially *kedey še-* "in order to"): *ʿazar *ʾoto* "helped him"; *ʾani ḥošev * ʾatah tsodeq* "I think you are right." She/he sometimes fails to use subordinate clause when required after verbs such as *rotseh* "want" and *meqawweh* "hope" (*ʾani roseh še-ʾatah *holex* "I want you to go"). Circumlocution often results in a lack of precision (e.g., *ʾalkohol yaxol laʿaśot harbeh devarim raʿim laḥayim* "Alcohol can do many bad things to life" instead of *ʾalkohol yaxol lehaziq* "alcohol can damage").

A native reader has no difficulty understanding writing at this level.

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and in detail. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences fully but has difficulty supporting points of view in written discourse. Can write about the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable

fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints and pressure writing may be inaccurate. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weakness and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling or character writing formation may result in occasional miscommunication. Some misuse of vocabulary may still be evident. Style may still be obviously foreign.

Hebrew. Able to write about a variety of topics with precision and in detail. Can write most social and informal business correspondence, using conventional greetings, openings and closings. Can describe and narrate personal experiences well, but has difficulty supporting points of view in written discourse. Can write about the concrete aspects of topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. The writer has good control of a full range of grammatical structures and a fairly wide general vocabulary but cannot yet use them comfortably and naturally all of the time. Some misuse of vocabulary may still be evident, but even these errors are all made at a fairly sophisticated level of vocabulary and structure. Writing may still be influenced by the writer's native language. Does not yet have any clear style or ability to vary style according to different tasks and readers, but writing demonstrates a good sense of organization. Both in quality and quantity the writer at this level performs at the Superior level over half of the time.

Superior

The Superior level is characterized by an ability to write formally and informally on practical, social and professional topics.

Generic. Able to express self effectively in most formal and informal writing on practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos as well as social and business letters, and short research papers and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling or nonalphabetic symbol production, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to hypothesize and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not

tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. Errors in writing rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.

Hebrew. Able to express self effectively in most formal and informal writing on practical, social and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos, social and business letters, and short research papers in areas of special interest or in special fields. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to present and support arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. An underlying organization, such as chronological ordering, logical ordering, cause and effect, comparison, and thematic development is strongly evident, although not thoroughly executed and/or not totally reflecting target language patterns. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still may not tailor writing precisely to a variety of purposes and/or readers. The length of writing at this level extends from a number or paragraphs up to a number of pages.

At this level the writer often employs the vocabulary of written Hebrew (*koh* "so," *'eynenah* "is not," *harey*), some features of classical Hebrew (*hino* "is") and Aramaicisms (*dehaynu* "that is") and shows general familiarity with the style and content of Hebrew writing as distinct from speech. The following features found in the writing of the educated native speaker can be expected to appear at this level: more extensive use of possessive suffixes and of the double genitive: *naga'ti beyadah* "I touched her hand" instead of *naga'ti lah bayyad* "I touched her on the hand"; *na' lehaḥziro* instead of *lehaḥzir 'oto* "please return it"; *meytareha šel haggiṭarah* instead of *hammeytarim šel haggiṭarah* "the strings of the guitar"; use of the "in which" construction: *habbayit bo gadalti* "the house in which I grew up"; use of adjectival construct phrases: *'adam nemux-qomah* "a short man"; use of "resumptive pronouns": *hannoše' še'e'emod 'alaw* "the subject I will discuss."

There is no evidence of patterned errors at this level. Mistakes may technically be the same as those at lower levels, but they occur only sporadically and at much higher levels of morphology, syntax and vocabulary. Some examples: slight mistakes in vocabulary: *lo' *rigšit* instead of *lo' ragšanit* "unemotional"; incorrect rendition of foreign names: **plaṭo* instead of *'aplaṭon* "Plato"; incorrect verb patterns: *'asur hu' lemi'uṭ lenasot *legaššem 'et ḥalomo* ... "A minority may not actualize its dream ... " instead of *lehagšim*; occasional unpatterned spelling mistakes. Such errors rarely disturb natives or cause miscommunication.

READING

The Reading Guidelines are based on the analysis of data gathered by means of an experimental reading test developed specifically for this purpose. All texts included in the exam were authentic. Among them were personal notes, newspaper advertisements, items on current events and other articles from Hebrew newspapers, including *Ša'ar Lamaṯhil* (a newspaper for immigrants to Israel), and unedited passages from non-fiction books.

Some of the questions which were not investigated and will require further research are: the reader's ability to read and understand texts including plene versus defective spelling, abbreviations and acronyms, sarcasm, irony and humor. The influence of the use of a dictionary on the reader's proficiency at all levels also needs to be further examined. The use of vowels or lack thereof was investigated, but the results were inconclusive.

Novice

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to

- identify isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context; and
- identify learned material.

Novice-Low

Generic. Able occasionally to identify isolated words and/or major phrases when strongly supported by context.

Hebrew. No functional ability to read Hebrew, but able to recognize some isolated letters and occasional learned words such as names, greetings and other words that may have been frequently seen in Hebrew writing (e.g., *šalom*, *ḥai*).

Novice-Mid

Generic. Able to recognize the symbols of an alphabetic and/or syllabic writing system and/or a limited number of characters in a system that uses characters. The reader can identify an increasing number of highly contextualized words and/or phrases including cognates and borrowed words, where appropriate. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase at a time, and rereading may be required.

Hebrew. Recognizes most consonants and understands that consonants in unpointed texts often stand for consonant + vowel. Able to recognize an increasing number of highly contextualized words and phrases, obvious loan words (*supermarqeṭ, hungaryah*), learned words and words known from cultural or religious background (*pesaḥ* "Passover," *šanah ṭovah* "Happy New Year").

Novice-High

Generic. Has sufficient control of the writing system to interpret written language in areas of practical need. Where vocabulary has been learned, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps and signs. At times, but not on a consistent basis, the Novice-High level reader may be able to derive meaning from material at a slightly higher level where context and/or extralinguistic background knowledge are supportive.

Hebrew. Has complete knowledge of the Hebrew alphabetic system, but may still have difficulty distinguishing letters that resemble each other, such as *dalet* and *reyš*, final *tsadi* and final *fe'*. With help from context, can identify the topic and some items from simple lists (TV programs, days of the week, names of months and of foreign languages), as well as some basic words for foods, articles of furniture, place names, etc. But sometimes misinterprets even simple lists (e.g., a TV schedule may be misinterpreted as a bus schedule, trip itinerary, list of items in a TV store, etc.). Can recognize basic grammatical structures when vocabulary is known or supplied (e.g., understands *zeh hassignon šeli* "this is my style" when *signon* "style" is supplied) and even extract meaning from a string of simple, connected sentences when context or background knowledge are supportive.

Intermediate

The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from simple connected texts.

Intermediate-Low

Generic. Able to understand main ideas and/or some facts from the simplest connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs. Such texts are linguistically noncomplex and have a clear

underlying internal structure, for example chronological sequencing. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make only minimal suppositions or to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples include messages with social purposes or information for the widest possible audience, such as public announcements and short, straightforward instructions dealing with public life. Some misunderstandings will occur.

Hebrew. Able to understand the main ideas and/or some details from simple connected texts on familiar topics. In letters, notes, dialogues and simple narratives, can identify the main topic, the main characters, and some of the details, mainly when verbs related to common daily functions are used (*kotev* "write," *yošev* "sit," *nosea'* "travel," *'oxel* "eat"). Fully understands simple sentences (*4 milyon we-537 'elef 'anašim ḥayyim hayyom beyiśra'el* "4,537,000 people live today in Israel"). Successfully identifies and understands basic structures and vocabulary in longer passages to get the gist of the text by ignoring unfamiliar material. While contextual clues are sometimes used successfully, overreliance on such clues may at other times mislead the reader.

Intermediate-Mid

Generic. Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience.

Hebrew. Good understanding of main idea and some details of simple advertisements and of short, factual, narrative texts (pointed, partially pointed, and unpointed) in familiar areas. Increasing comfort with Hebrew structure permits the reader to get meaning from unfamiliar expressions such as *midei yom* "every day," *yoter me'ašer* "more than," *haxi 'ohevet* "favorite." The reader has a wider vocabulary (*mafteaḥ* "key"; *'arha"v* "U.S."; *yehudim umuslemim* "Jews and Muslims") and greater ability to infer meaning from unknown vocabulary by relying on context (an Intermediate-Mid reader who does not know the word *taxšiṭim* "jewelry" may understand from the phrase *kesef vetaxšiṭim* "money and jewelry" that *taxšiṭim* refers to

some kind of valuables). Can interpret present, past and sometimes future tense of most regular and some common irregular verbs (*nixnasnu lediratenu* "we moved into our apartment"; *ʾanaḥnu mazminim* "we invite"; *ʾeḥzor raq baʿerev* "I will not return till evening"). Strong tendency to confuse cues with graphically similar but more familiar ones (e.g., *dawid* for *dod* "uncle").

Intermediate-High

Generic. Able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs about which the reader has personal interest and/or knowledge. Can get some main ideas and information from texts at the next higher level featuring description and narration. Structural complexity may interfere with comprehension; for example, basic grammatical relations may be misinterpreted and temporal references may rely primarily on lexical items. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. While texts do not differ significantly from those at the Advanced level, comprehension is less consistent. May have to read material several times for understanding.

Hebrew. Usually able to identify Who, What, When and Where in short connected texts on basic subjects. Can often get the gist of even longer paragraphs when expectations cued by the text are fulfilled. Consistently comprehends most details of simple informative texts such as non-technical advertisements, personal notes and messages. The Intermediate-High reader can identify most past, present, and future tense forms of frequent verbs in all verb patterns, and so can grasp the chronological sequence of events. Emerging but inconsistent ability to understand Advanced-level texts featuring description and narration.

Advanced

The Advanced level is characterized by

- an ability to read with consistent understanding prose several paragraphs in length, dealing primarily with factual information and intended for the general reader; and
- in areas of special interest or knowledge, an increasing ability to understand parts of texts which are propositionally and linguistically more complex.

Advanced

Generic. Able to read somewhat longer prose of several paragraphs in length, particularly if presented with a clear underlying structure. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Reader gets the main ideas and facts and misses some details. Comprehension derives not only from situational and subject matter knowledge but from increasing control of the language. Texts at this level include descriptions and narrations such as simple short stories, news items, biographical information, social notices, personal correspondence, routinized business letters and simple technical material written for the general reader.

Hebrew. Can understand multi-paragraph materials which include descriptions and narrations, such as news items, short stories, biographical information, short feature articles and the like, when logical development (story line, chronological sequence, or other rhetorical structure) is straightforward and the subject matter is familiar. Able to combine information extracted from various parts of the text and make inferences and comparisons, but may miss some details. Sometimes misinterprets colloquialisms that sound comprehensible (e.g., *ḥozer habbayta beʿeśer ʾaḥat-ʿeśreh* "returns home around ten or eleven" may be interpreted as 10:11) and misreads cultural cues due to own background (e.g., an Advanced reader who sees *bet-sefer ḥilloni* "secular school" may understand it as "public school" because religious schools in America are all private).

Can fully comprehend the most important details of a wide range of advertisements (e.g., for a student organization, a language school, a hotel). Understands connective devices such as *welaxen* "therefore," *ʿeqev kax* "as a result," *lamrot* "although," *ʾax* "but." Has usually mastered the form of conditional and relative clauses as well as of the verbal tenses and other forms (infinitives, negative imperatives) of regular and frequent irregular verbs, but may still ignore obvious grammatical cues or seize a familiar vocabulary cue and thus misinterpret. Has a broader range of vocabulary (e.g., *histaglut* "adjustment"; *meḥqar* "research"; *goremet* "causes") and can comprehend texts containing nouns with possessive suffixes (*talmidaw* "his students"; *yexolto* "his ability") and other characteristics of a more formal style.

Advanced-High

Generic. Able to follow essential points of written discourse at the Superior level in areas of special interest or knowledge. Able to understand parts of texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. Able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. A partial awareness of the aesthetic properties of language and of its literary styles permits comprehension of a wider variety of texts, including literary. Misunderstandings may occur.

Hebrew. Can understand multi-paragraph texts within an increasing range of factual and familiar topics and, with uneven comprehension, abstract, hypothetical or other Superior-level texts as well. Understands most of the finer points of texts containing a wide variety of grammatical structures, e.g., has increased awareness of semantic relationships between forms of the same root realized in different verb patterns, and has fully mastered subordinate clauses at all different levels of complexity. Shows emerging but inconsistent ability to understand different registers in written materials.

Superior

The Superior level is characterized by an ability to read, for information or for pleasure with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed, a wide variety of texts on a wide variety of topics.

Generic. Able to read with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed expository prose on unfamiliar subjects and a variety of literary texts. Reading ability is not dependent on subject matter knowledge, although the reader is not expected to comprehend thoroughly texts which are highly dependent on knowledge of the target culture. Reads easily for pleasure. Superior-level texts feature hypotheses, argumentation and supported opinions and include grammatical patterns and vocabulary ordinarily encountered in academic/professional reading. At this level, due to the control of general vocabulary and structure, the reader is almost always able to match the meanings derived from extralinguistic knowledge with meanings derived from knowledge of the language, allowing for smooth and efficient reading of diverse texts. Occasional misunderstandings may still occur; for example, the reader may

experience some difficulty with unusually complex structures and low-frequency idioms. At the Superior level the reader can match strategies, top-down or bottom-up, which are most appropriate to the text. (Top-down strategies rely on real-world knowledge and prediction based on genre and organizational scheme of the text. Bottom-up strategies rely on actual linguistic knowledge.) Material at this level will include a variety of literary texts, editorials, correspondence, general reports and technical material in professional fields. Rereading is rarely necessary, and misreading is rare.

Hebrew. Can read with close to full comprehension a wide array of texts, including a large selection of articles in Hebrew newspapers, which deal with abstract and unfamiliar topics. These texts may include hypothetical concepts and utilize argumentation and supported opinion. Able to understand selected unabridged and unadapted literary pieces with the help of a dictionary. Comfortable with a wider range of culture-specific material. Can read material which includes more sophisticated vocabulary, idioms, and metaphoric language (*qvi'ut* "tenure"; *'oxeret yiśra'el* understood as "betrayer/destroyer of Israel"; *haqqibbuts kamohu keṭipat mayim hamešaqqefet beherkevah 'et kol mah šematsui ba'oqyanos* "The kibbutz is like a drop of water that reflects in its structure everything that is found in the ocean").

Unfamiliarity with infrequent vocabulary, misreading due to lack of vowels, confusion about semantic indicators, and lack of familiarity with some culture-specific material may still cause occasional unpatterned misunderstandings.

Distinguished

The Distinguished level is characterized by the ability to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language within comprehension that is achieved from within the cultural framework of the language and that includes appreciation of nuance and subtlety.

Generic. Able to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language pertinent to academic and professional needs. Able to relate inferences in the text to real-world knowledge and understand almost all sociolinguistic and cultural references by processing language from within the cultural framework. Able to understand a writer's use of nuance and subtlety. Can readily follow

unpredictable turns of thought and author intent in such materials as sophisticated editorials, specialized journal articles, and literary texts such as novels, plays, poems, as well as in any subject matter area directed to the general reader.

Hebrew. Able to read fluently and accurately most styles and forms of the language pertinent to academic and professional needs. Understands most allusions in modern Hebrew literature from earlier sources. Sensitive to subtle nuances, and possesses sufficient knowledge of Israeli culture to follow virtually any colloquial or idiomatic usage intended for the general reader (e.g., *ro'š mo'atsah* "council head" as roughly equivalent to small town mayor; *'arvei kitah* "parties" rather than the apparent literal meaning of "night school"; *midat haḥesed* and *midat haddin*, terms from rabbinic literature referring to leniency or strictness).

Copy from print to script:

כשחזרתי הביתה ראיתי על הדלת פתק קטן מיוסף. הוא כתב שיש לי מכתב רשום בדואר.
נסעתי מיד לדואר ומצאתי שם איגרת מחוץ לארץ.

א) כשחזרתי הביתה ראיתי על הדלת
פתק קטן מיוסף.

ב) הוא כתב שיש לי מכתב רשום בדואר.

ג) נסעתי מיד לדואר ומצאתי שם
איגרת מחוץ לארץ.

Novice-Mid

Use each of the following words in a Hebrew sentence: I "new," "dining room," etc.]

א) שמי [illegible] אני גר ב[illegible]

ב) אני אוהב מקום שקט.

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Novice-High

Tell about your roommate.

ג) שמה דינה. היא (Dina)

היא מניו יורק. (New York)

היא לומדת בברנדייס. (Brandeis)

Write a note to your roommate, including questions.

א) שלום! מה שלומך? מה שמות הסופרות?

מי כותבת לך? מה מורה? אפה מה

לומדים?

שלי!

Complete:

In my refrigerator I have –

חלב

ביצים

גבינה

In my house there are –

ג) שולחן גדול-מאוד

כסאות

מחשב

Write a note to your friend.

א) שלום פ'נה

שמי יוסף. אני סטודנט.
בברוקלין. אני. גומרת עבודת
מה אתה. סומרת?
למה אתה לומד?

יוסף

Reply.

ב) שלום יוסף.
אני סטודנט. ת. אני.
אני לומד ב. קולג' ברוקלין
אבל אני גר. ביורק. אני
עבודת קאסתל.!

פ'נה

This year I want to –

א) השנה אני רוצה ללמד ולשנות
טוב בכיתה שלי. גם אני רוצה
להיות רגוע ולא שמן. אין לי
שמן. ואני גם רוצה להיות כמו כה
סופר פסח !! בבקשה... גם אני רוצה
להיות חבורה טוב מאד לשנוא
כשאני אני צריכה מחברים שלי.

A postcard from abroad

ב) שלום מ'מ'
אני בברלין אכשיו. אני לומד
באוניברסיטה. אני יכול קורסו
צרפתית וכותב. מאין אתה? בברלסך
את סטודנטים או מורה? אני אוהב
חדש.

שלום,
יונתן

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Self-description

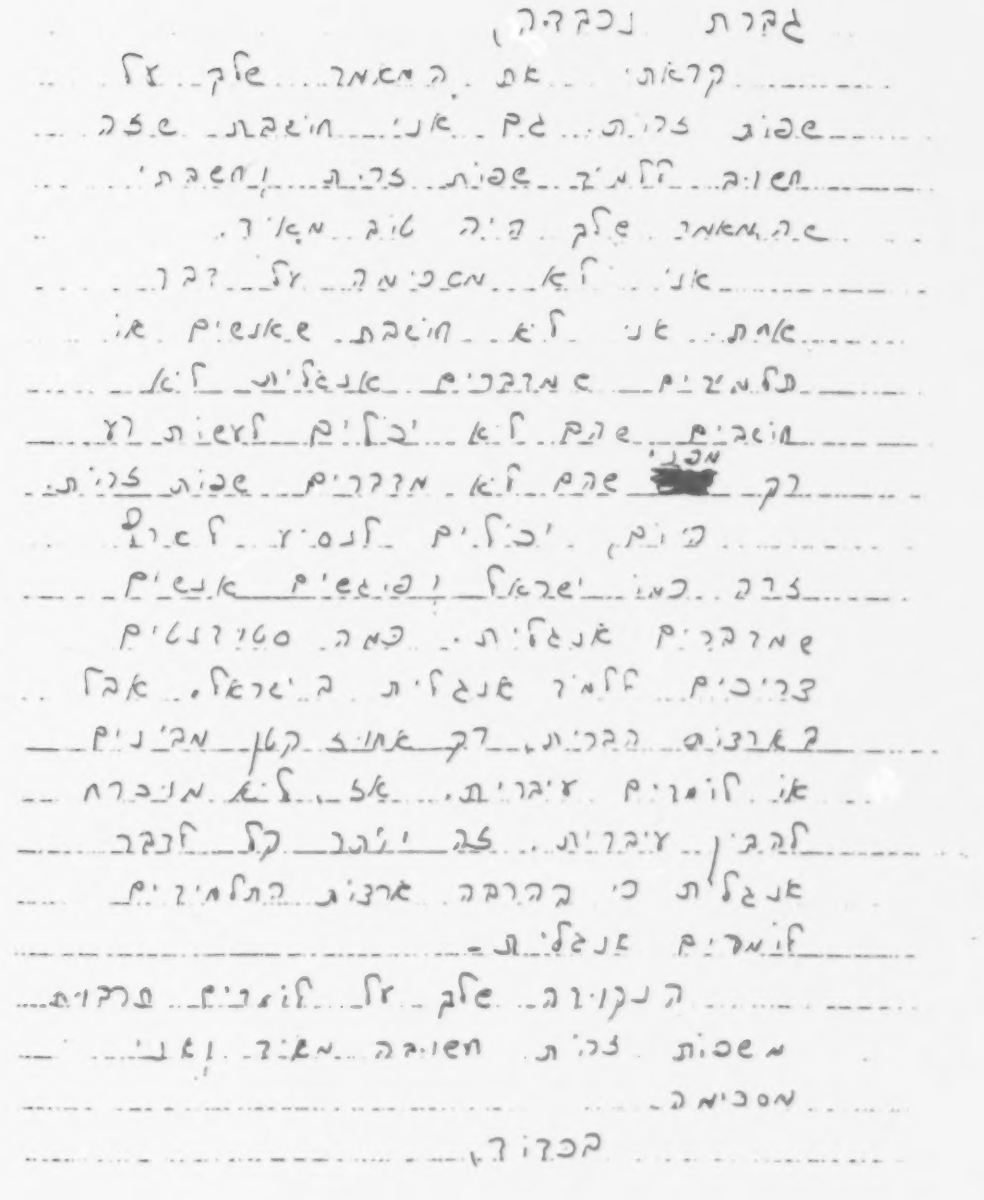
בתי הגדולה אשרה-יפה נולדה בשנת 1999. היא ילדה
חכמה. אוהבת לקרוא ספרים. היא אוהבת לשחק
כדורסל. היא לומדת בכיתה ח' בבית הספר
"מבואות ים". היא אוהבת לשחק עם חברותיה
ולצחוק. אוהבת לבלות עם משפחתה ולטייל
בחופשות. היא אוהבת לנגן בפסנתר ולשיר.
היא אוהבת לאכול פיצה ושוקולד. היא
אוהבת לשחק במחשב ולראות סרטים מצחיקים!
אני אוהבת בנות. אין לי אחיות. אני חושבת שהן
דוגמניות מפורסמות בטלויזיה.
אין לי מושג מה לעשות! אני חושבת שהן
אומרות שהן עבדים, ושהיא הדבה בשוט.
אני לומדת עברית, ושהיא הדבה בשוט.
שמי גולי. אני סטודנטית בברנדייס אני גרה בוולטן.

A letter from Israel

שלום! מה נשמע? ארה"ב, אני בטיול שנתי. אולפן נמאוד
וכיוד רצה הוא תמיד הסומטרה. אני יודעת שלמדתי
הרבה מילים בשולפן, אולם מה קשה לדעת כאה. לפו
למדתי בניניך חדשים. חלק-אני מקווה שהסומטרה הפה
שאני לומדת הרבה עברית אני אוהבת לדבר לאנשים
בחוה בעברית. אלייך לך, כשאני חברים עם ישראלים
כיף לפו רוצים לדבר בעברית. אני חושבת שאין למה
להגלות, רק מפני שאני לא מדברת ואני יודעת
לתשוב לפני אני מדברת. הפה לפו תשוב
אני אוהבת את ישראל. לפעמים אני feel upset עלם
הבעיות בארץ. אני לפו יכולה להאמין ש ישראל still
exists הפה הניב'קלם (miracle) יהודי! אלך פעם חשבתי
שאולי אשוב בארץ, אולם עכשיו אני לפו חושבת הפי.
אני לפו יכולה לעבוד אף פעם לך, אל אוהב עכשיו.
אני חושבת שאני רוצה להיות ... רב! rabbi ב יצא
אנק אומרים רב הפה נהפה אני יודעת שפעו קלק למאוד
רב נהפה כי הפה לפו לפי התורה

שלום. ה'יום סף-3-26. אני מצטי
את פה במחברת שלי. את קבלת מכתב מאתי?
חשבתי שכתבתי לך, אולם עכשיו אני לפו יודעת. אני
מצטערת שלפו שלחתי את המכתב הפה. אני לפו מכתת
אתי כתבתי. אני מקווה שבח"י שלק טוב.
להתראות.

Response to a letter to the editor



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Advanced

I got back to school yesterday and –

אל שיחב ונחכור

ואוניברסיטה... אבל... גם יצא לי... עשיה

שאני כותבת על גם אבל גם רק קשה לפרוט

כאלו ואני שתים שיעורי

אתמול הכנתי לבחינה ו...

אתמול הכנתי לבחינה וראיתי שכולם
מיומנים בלימודי-זוגות. שלי. בדקתי
את במעטפה, וראיתי שכתוב בו "בוגר
אוניברסיטה". בכלל לא ידעתי מי שלח את המכתב.
אז פתחתי אותו, ומה תמונות נפלו מן
המעטפה. כלומר ידעתי שזה שלח
אותי את המכתב. מיוזעים. כזה אז
אכזיו בארץ ושאלתי מתי נסגרים
שמן. בתמונה בראשונה כ"כ אחי ואחרי
זיף בפיו שלפתי כ"כ אוד תמונות על
כך המשפחה שלנו על השבוע שלפתי
כזה כתב שכבר בסדר, ושהוא
בדרכים. כדי לדעת אם רק הסדר אין בת בבדיוס.

Superior

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Superior

לאחר שנים רבות של מחשבה עמוקה שוב, גיליתי
שיש סוד קיום אין תחתיך! קהו - ואיזו עיניך מאמינה פ'
המלכה שמצביעים שיש רבה ומיוון בשאלה שאין
לבן מדקה. לקיש סיבות לתפילות במוצאי הסופות
ולחיות בדרך כלל מובילו לשלום, לאכפה ולישוב,
ואפילו את לאיבוד - הדרכת. ולמה כל כך?
בֵּיתִי-לחיים! מדוע קרה כך ובכך, שהשלום היה
כמעט תמיד: "מי יודע"?
לשחרר - בתנאים המוקלות ביותר כדי שהוא
מה כאן ואם לא כדאי לשאול. שלומי: מה יותר
לשאול מדוע ויש בעולם. מה מעניין בעולם? אדוע
מוכן לשפוך שהוא-לבן. אין קיום לשחרר: בדיוק כדי שלא
עזוב עיניך - יום כדי יש תשר בעולם, אין
בין-לבם לשחרר בין? שמור עליך שביר במה
בדקים ומורים:

(כ)

הסיבה- אלהי הישועה שלנו: לא מן הנמנע
האמת.
ושמים בקרב לומר אוכל לתת אחת-פני
ואפשר לקבל: "נִצְחָה", יש לנו בעיות שרוצים
הרעיון שלכם. עליה הרי לבמה, אבל בשורת
והיהודים, על מי, שחושבים בבית-
ולמשוך אחריה הרעיונות
עם הדוגמאות הבאים לאלקיים לחלק
רעיונותם האחרונים על-ידי-צמיחה.
חלופים לצמר שרי-מצמר ובמונים ואפשרות
הפרוטוקולים לדברים אלך הם לבית-
שיווקם.
ביקום כלול יש וכו' מבנן! החלטים צורמים
באמצעות לדבר כי מלך-שנה שאתך כי